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1 PlayStation_®Move

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marked and copyrighted properties of their respecti et optional. Sold seperately.

PlayStation® The Official Magazine

COVER FEATURE

MARCH 2011



Can snowstorms and jetpacks propel this series to even greater heights? Can its multiplayer finally end Call of Duty's stranglehold on the world of online shooters? Find out in our exclusive first review.

ON THE COVER



Page 44 Uncharted 3 Page 16

Page 26 Page 54

FEATURES



MARVEL VS. DC Six superhero games square off, including the long anticipated DC Universe Online.



Gamers get crafty and show off some of their homemade creations. Sackboy ahoy!

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Marvel vs. DC

Craftworks Where DIY meets the PS3.

In the zone or out of control? Find out!

Six super games for our heroic system.

Killzone 3

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Blu-ray

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Want That

PS3 Directory

PSP Directory

Qore Calendar

Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds

Test Drive Unlimited 2 echochrome ii

X-Men: The Arcade Game



MOTORSTORM: APOCALYPSE Apparently the world will be destroyed by some kind of storm. Possibly involving motors.



LEVEL (LEVEL

MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 3

Spoiler alert: It's very good. We've already started assembling trios of fighters in our minds: The Street Fighter team, the Avengers team, the team where every character is green...



PSN Directory/Video Delivery

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED 2

Race cars, rule the world. Sounds like a pretty sweet deal, right? Not exactly.



Super Power

We can be heroes, for more than just one day

This issue is all about heroes. Some are cartoonish, with boisterous abilities and screen-filling powers; others are subdued, relying on subtle flaps of cloth to communicate in a lonely desert. Some are resourceful, using their diminutive stature to stack their way into bigger and bigger buddies; others are larger than life, gods among men, calling forth heavenly powers to smite their foes. But no matter what shape or style they come in, all have one thing in common: They are us.

Indeed, this issue's colossal collection of heroes represents everything I love about videogames. No matter what the fantasy, no matter what my mood might be, I can find the perfect escape on my PS3. I can retreat from my workaday life, if only for a few hours, and don the tights, the cape, the flak jacket, the jetpacks, whatever-and roam the world dealing justice as I please. From our stunning coverstar-the utterly amazing Killzone 3-to



our review of Marvel vs. Capcom 3, our featured roundup of Marvel and DC games, and our sneak peeks at the heroes of tomorrow, including Nathan Drake and Duke Nukem, this issue is chockablock with colorful (and playable) characters.

Speaking of heroes, one note about DC Universe Online. Those looking for our review will have to wait another month. Since MMOs. are all about the interactions of a massive community, we thought it unfair to give a final verdict before we could go questing with the rest of you. For now, though, we've got an opinionated tour of DCUO on page 58. Enjoy!





Gary Steinman Editor in Chief Chief editor Gary Steinman apologizes for PTOM's overabundance of awesomeness. Well, not really. He just wants to seem as if he's humble.



Ken Bousquet Art Director This is Ken Bousquet. We can't thank him enough for his great art. We're sorry we had to chain him to his desk to ensure he never ever [Not ever!] leaves us



Scott Butterworth Associate Editor When the steel chair of injustice strikes Scott Butterworth against the back, rest assured, he will call upon the power of the Butterworthians to defeat evil.



Christin Chi Designer Rumors that Christin Chi emits a pleasant smelling and lemony-fresh scent when it is time for cake have yet to be disproven.



Greg Orlando Executive Editor Plucky ne'er-do-well Greg Orlando was recently voted most likely to be crushed 'twixt the gears of life's cruel machinery. No recount is forthcoming.



Roger Burchill Managing Editor Supereditor Roger Burchill would like to inform everyone he is not, in fact, in the habit of making monkeys, but rather



Anne Lewis Editorial Intern Young Anne forms one-half of PTOM's female bloc, a delightful beet salad to our grizzled plate of rocks, unpleasantness, and, also, monosodium glutamate



BioTron 6625 Robotic Bio-Writer BioTron 6625 is a clinking, clattering collection of anger and resentment. But at least it's not a cardboard box with a pinwheel in it, as BioTron 4400 was.

PlayStation The Official Magazine

Associate Guior Joint Butter won Intern Anne Lewis Editorial Contributors Tony Barrett, Matt Cabral, James Coates, Jason D'Aprile, Matt Elliott, Henry Gilbert, Michael Grimm, Andy Hartup, Andrew Hayward, Gus Mastrapa, Nathan Meunier, Tom Price, Evan Shamoon, David F. Smith

ART Art Director Ken Bousquet Designer Christin Chi Creative Director Chris Imlay BUSINESS Publisher Kristen Salvatore ksalvatore@futureus.com Vice President/Games Kellev Corten

Vice President/Joames Reliey Corten kcortenfaltureus.com Vice President/Sales & Marketing Rachelle Considine Executive Director Integrated Sales Nate Hunt 415-269-5408, nhunt@futureus.com 45: 548-540, hww.influturmsc.com. view. Hum. William Sales Kanagar – Key Account I Isaac Ugy 749-369. 0747, luga/gifutureus, Count I Isaac Ugy 749-369. 0747, luga/gifutureus, com. Regional Sales Uricer of zari Gillard 646-722-8746, cgillard filbrutureus, com. Regional Sales Salesangar Arthur St. Germán Regional Sales Salesangar Arthur St. Germán Derivat Consumer Managar Alan Dickinson 248-779-2208, andmensial@com.ast.net Account Executive Allyson Kardel 650-654-5722, and entille filbrutureus, com. Advertising Downlantor Heid Hapin Amagar Andrea Recio-Angaraccio-ang@flutureus.com.

PRODUCTION
Production Director Michael Hollister
Production Manager Larry Briseno
Senior Production Coordinator Dan Mallery
Print Order Coordinator Jennifer Lim

CONSUMER MARKETING Vice President/Consumer Marketing Rich McCarthy Circulation Director Stephnik Blake Circulation Director Stephnik Blake Consumer Marketing Operations Director Lisa Radier Consumer Marketing Amager Jennifor Trinking Customer Service Manager Mike Frassice



President John Marcom Vice President/CFO John Sutton General Counsel Anne Ortel
Human Resources Director Nancy Durlester DuBois

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Non-executive Chairman: Roger Parry Chief Executive: Stevie Spring Group Finance Director: John Bowman

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 Sports Marketing & Media
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Inside Qore Episode 34

Here Be Dragons!



One name gets role-playing gamers salivating like dogs at dinnertime: BioWare. The veteran RPG studio bites back into fantasy with Dragon Age II. This month, we peek into the title by talking with developers and playing through massive quests.

InFamous 2 is building into another fantastic follow-up, partly because of its bold music. We go on location to Skywalker Ranch to showcase the musicians and their soundtrack. Then, see why Crysis 2 is gunning for the honors as the best-looking FPS yet, and do anything to win urban races in MotorStorm: Apocalypse.

VERONICA BELMONT HOST OF OORE

3/8/2011



PlayStation Network





The Music of InFamous 2

The lush soundtrack rises and booms. matching Cole's destructive wake



Crysis 2

Sure, visuals aren't everything... but have you seen these graphics!?

MotorStorm: **Apocalypse**

Outfit your urban vehicles for speed and destruction.



Upcoming Blu-ray and Games

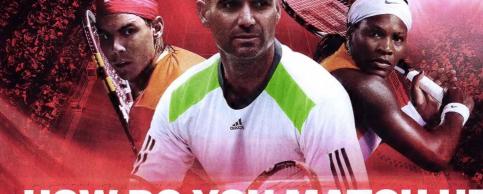
releases Audrey sets her sights on the hottest Blu-rays this month! PlayStation Plus subscribers.



Individual episodes can be purchased for \$2.99 and a 13-episode subscription can be purchased for \$24.99. Qore subscribers have access to Betas. demos, themes, and additional downloadable content each month.

CONTENT SUBJECT TO CHANGE





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The PlayStation Entertainment Plan

Fill up your life with our monthly guide



TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

Dr. Seuss Birthday We will all be eating green eggs and ham today, which sounds gross to us, but is necessary to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday.

THURSDAY

03

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY



MAR. 01

Bambi Out on Blu-ray Yes, we cried when Bambi's mom died.

05







Happy Birthday Pam



09

Viardi Gras





Daylight Savings Time Begins This is when we turn the clocks forward and lose an hour of sleep, right? That seems both annoying and like too much work, so we think we're going to skip it.



In stores: Dragon Age II, Homefront, MLB 11: The Show, MLB 2K11



St. Patrick's

It's the best reason to drink: because we feet like it. Oh, and it's St. Patrick's Day



20

Extra-terrestrial Abduction Day



Kirk's Birthday Many years from now Captain James T. Captain James T. Kirk will celebrate his birthday. Today we honor this by enjoying the awesomeness that is Star Trek. On Blu-ray.



31





29







Souls of Zill O'll

2.8.2011



Commanding a party of three heroes, switch between fighters on the fly and punish your foes



With powerful magic and techniques at your disposal



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The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

Pul Mirye

The race Later of Motor



Mestart diggi 'Mestart diggi disc fake'.



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Photograph



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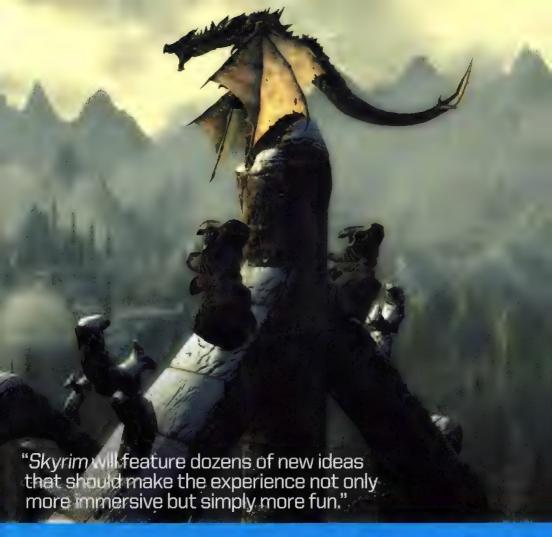




Bethesda's next great RPG revealed

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Company of the compan



Far more important, however, Skyrim will feature dozens of new ideas that should make duet-wielding weapons and magic, one-button fast travel around the map, the ability to forge custom weapons at a blacksmith's shop. Others are much more involved: when players engage someone in conversation, that character will continue to move and act as they would in real life rather than stopping to Side-quests and missions will be

dynamically altered to fit a player's previous with rescuing a hostage, the game might place with be scaled to match the player's level so one won't simply be decimated by pumped up goons). Other missions might be customized to suit a player's particular skills or past actions. Say we kinda-sorta killed a his shop might resent us and be reluctant to enlist our help in future quests.

In that time, a civil war has erupted, dragons have returned to the fictional realm of Tamriel and the Nordic god Alduin has decided he'd last remaining dragon hunter, players must thwart all manner of mythical creatures and attempt to save the world not only from supernatural evil but also from itself. We're but, alas, we won't know for sure until the name hits store shelves this November.





Time for Mods

Multiple patches planned for Gran Turismo 5

After five years of work on an 11-year-old tempt of Gran Turismo 5 remains untinished. That is the opinion of Polyphony Digitat's main man Kazuma Yamauchi, who said recently he considers GT6 of work in progress.

Speaking via Twitter, Yamauchi promisee 16, 300 a host of features, or at least consider adding them, at some point between now and, er, the end of the universe. Okay, we're being unkind, but the online game shipped in an incomplete state—and Yamauchis keenly aware of it.

Polyphony has already released a patch making mechanical damage an option, along with weight and maximum power restrictions, for online racing. Players can choose either light, self-healing damage, or a far more deadly heavy option. Previously, full damage was unlocked only at level 40, while the end credits roll at level 15. Full damage remains available only on premium cars, which represent 20 percent of the 1,031-car total.

Yamauchi expects to add online lounge functions, such as a way for hosts not to get locked out of their own races while choosing a car. It's still way behind key rival NFS: Hot Pursuits friend-tracking Autolog system, but at least Yamauchi is listening. And acting Albeit slowly.

The Japanese developer is also working on support for the popular, four-year-old Logitech G25 wheel and its year-old G27 replacement.

Other possible, but not confirmed, tweaks to existing *Gran Turismo* elements include adding rewards to online races, a button to switch off the heads-up display, and doing something about the incredibly-LEGO-edged shadows, for which Yamauchi blames the camera angles. Certainly the problem would be solved if the camera wasn't actually pointing at the shadows.

GT5's YouTube upload feature may return too, having been pulled before release for consuming too much memory and taking too long to render in contrast, Codemasters' Dirt 3 offers a near-instantaneous version. Alternatively, Yamauchi may continue work instead on his rule-obeying free-roam mode [we're calling it "C-Spec"], where players drive around at the speed limit, obey traffic laws, and possibly even get out and walk. It may seem as if we're joking, but we're not.





The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



Combat Ready

What we know about the new Call of Duty and Battlefield games

Battlefield 3



It's Modern Combat The introduction of Vietnam to Bad Company 2 says the next Battlefield will return to modern wartare. Is it going to be another Bad Company If so, we hope single player



There'll Be a Beta (Inose who boughthe Meda (Inose who boughthe Meda) of Hanor limited edition will be given first dibs on the Battlefeld's multiplayer beta Jourguess's it won the live usual autumn, but DiCE does like to launch mals sarriy, so it might be sooner



DICE is Making It
This is an obvious, out crucial point. DICE made the multiplayer for a good bit of it in Medal of Honor, and has earned from that experience. Nobody does multiplayer as DICE does, so expect this to se the new Battlefield's focus.



Co-op Play is Likely Having experimented with co-op in Company 25 onslaught mode, we expect to be standard in Battleried 3, even rist sincluded within who then harde-style mode instead of as an extension of the main story campaign.



New Modes Possible Players need more than us tush and Conquest modes Anticipate fresh maps, new modes similar to Objective Raid, and a return for popular Company 2 stages such as Arica Harbor and istal inocentes

Call of Duty 8



It's Modern Combat rean, a no-brainer, because we're expecting Modern Warfare 3, right? The Activision tradition of switching between Treyarch's pre-modern war



Infinity Ward is In Despite high-profile-losses the developer is still going the engine is solid, so all the earn needs to do is finish the story. Will it be its last Call of Duty! Expect it to linish Modern Wartare and nand litture modern-day.



...Sledgehammer
Glen - Dead Space
Schoffield's new team is
definitely atwork one Calif
Daty game. Will we see it in
2017 Sledgehammer will
tikely, take the senes into
the more distant future
although not the distant



Multiplayer is Free 050 of Activision Publishin Enic Hirshberg responder thusly to a question about future Call of Duty games. Are we going to be charging for multiplayer. The answer is no. Sadly downloadable content may appear on 2010 for the same of the content may appear on 2010 for the same of the content may appear on 2010 for the same of the same



Price Will Be Back
At the end of call of JUJy;
Wodern Warfare 2, Price and
Nicolai were suprives. After
ensuring Soap on medical
attention for his wounds, the
fleet obgether to Nicolai seaf olace, We expect the nex,
game to pickup where this
conclusion left off.



Top 10 PSP Games of 2011 Trails in the Sky

has a reputation among importers for being a huge well-told tale tull of mean combat and great characters.



Join the legendary Bracer's Guild and travel the world on an epic quest: Champion the justice of the kingdom.



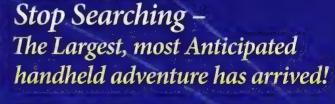
Enjoy over 50 hours of gameplay, plus many optional sidequests.



Plan your strategies carefully, making the most of each character, weapon and ability.







The Legend of Heroes





The Big 10

Drake vs. The Desert

Fact or theory? The Uncharted 3 Leaser gives on five of each. She what the trailer reveals.







The Faces

the latest terminal t

and a good Co. See the good Co. Let

termed in court to per bearings

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y C. Sangarigado



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erry track to garage a contract



Our Theories



London

As well as a partially obscurred. London phone number, we see. To and 20-pound note places, under a book. Drake may visit polly old England—most probab London. Harry Efvin. his old Friend from Unhearted 2-Among Thieves, was from the United Kingdom. Maybe well get a Lashback showing now the lwo became partness?



The pentagram

Ins symbol is setting to a special peniagram from the Thir century book The Lesser Ke of Solomon. According to this ancient, authoritiess text-avorite among demonologistic intended to preserve their from danger, and also comman the spirits by. Which raises the question: Whit Drake deal with the supernatural again.



The explorers

The names of Bertram Thomas St. John Philos, and Wilfred Thesigner are written down. Thomas was the first Westerner to cross the Rub, al Khali desert Philoy was an explorer, and travel writer. Drake may use the work of these respected explorers to help him find the ancient tost city of iram.



T.E. Lawrence

Better known by the name Lawrence of Arabia—and immertailed by Peter O'Toule tine classe; tim of the saminame—Thomas Edward Lawrence was a British Army officer, writer, and archaeologist, tills uleas and theories about the lost cityol iram form the basis of Uncharte Sk mysterious storyline.



The book

of Wisdom by 1, b. Lawrence are read out took by a somber sounding Drake in the trailer. The discarries of the day are dangerous ment, for they may ache in dream with open ayes, to hake I too solble. This I did, as he reads the final line, the camera guits back to reveal the site of a deser plane crash.





Duke Nukem Rising

The Dake won't be deterred by time or tide. And Randy Pitchburd. the man who revoved Dains Nuisem, tells tales of the resurrection

better. I'm not sure anything can live up to 12 years of anticipation. I'm committed to following through with

Are you worried the legacy will overshadow the actual game? I don't know, we'll see. Obviously I made the decision I did to get involved, but I bet on Duke and I believe it'll work out. We'll see what happens. I







Whois Randy Pitchford?

Duke's been around since 1996.

he's totally one-dimensional. And he

cliché. Duke feels fresh and stands and attention for Duke, and it's not because of all the games that have

Can you get away with more now than you could in the '90s?

They take their jobs very seriously,

And if it rejects it, then the line goes back a bit. I think right now the lines are moving out and the boundaries are getting further away. We're in the

other Gearbox games to Duke Nukem Forever?

Duke is our experience in making

realized. It's their vision, and that's

like "Oh, that makes sense. I didn't using the tools of the game to see if something coal. I like this kind of together to make Duke very unique.



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



Decisions, Decisions...

Joury-Principle Degas, project loud on Dines Ex: Human Revolution. waxes philosophic on choice and gunplay

How similar will Deus Ex: gamers need to play the previous games?
This is a new game basically. We

gamers that never experienced the really, really good premise and it has a lot of potential and possibilities,

The trailers so far have ogy. Can you comment on some of the material that's influenced the game? where technology and human

Can you explain the "choice

consider. Am

will get a reward." We're trying to opposed to Oh, I'm going to have

impact the rest of the game along the way, or will they

player sees?

can actually complete the game without killing

A Serious Man Grappling with

subjects like socio-economic prejudice and the technology, Deus Ex Human Revolution may rival brainy games like BioShock n terms of ntellectual ambition. But that doesn't mean we won't get to blow explosions too!





Field of Dreams

Wade McGilberry made a million dollars playing MLB 2K10, Who's next?

-CTION

Take the Mound

M.B.2K11's Perfect Same Challenge should be more competitive based or these changes to the contest format:

A Commence of the commence of for this year s contestants

How long have you been playing MLB 2K? time I'd played the baseball game.

day of the contest. Was it skill or luck?

WADE MCGILBERRY tried to Reep it in the Color Zones & Circle Color on my pitches of f the plate, but I tried to avoid throwing pitches at full strength so when a batter actually got a hit there wasn't much power behind it. I only

Walk us through the final inning. What'd you do

After sending in your video, how long did it take

At some and the second was a supported by the second was a supported by the second was a supported by the second was a support of the second was a supported by the second was a supported

changed your life?

Are you going to try for a repeat with MLB 2KU?

this year's Challenge?



Home Invasion

We stalk an unwitting subject to discover what people do in Home



When we connect to Home, we see people milling around and wonder what they re up to. We decided to investigate—by which we

We went to Home Square, closed our eyes and pointed at the screen. Uur hinger felt upon a random avatar whose name and dentity we've chosen to-protect Our subject—let's call him Cliff—is standing by the water

Suddenly, he runs off. We give chase, Irying to keep our distance and not look conspicuous -difficult when our avstar is sporting a giant beard. He runs toward two men who are sitting cross-legged talking about growing, ahem, herbal remedies in their bedrooms. Surely Cliff will chimin, if only to express moral our age... o ask for tips? Nething.

His avatar pulls out its PDA—a sign

that he's in the menu. After a minute of fiddling, he returns, and goes to stand beside other avatars, possibly sizing up their outlits.

as it turns out, is an awfully dull stalkee. Is near ear person? An A.I. bot designed to make Home look busier than it actually 15? That would be one

possible explanation for why there are so many people in Home who never say anything. Are the

real users buying expensive hats and sofas to impress uncaring automatons? It's worth thinking about But not for any great length of time.



The Readers' Most Wanted

titles, Coincidence? We think not. Not that we're patting ourselves on the back, as that would be unseemly. Instead, we'll just silently gloat, quietly confident in our innate ability to always make the



- 01 Mortal Kombat
- 02 LittleBigPlanet 2
- D3 Killzone 3
- 04 Twisted Metal
- 05 Batman: Arkham City
- 06 Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception
- 07 SUCOM 4: U.S. Navy
- O8 MLB 11: The Show
- 09 Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds
- 10 DC Universe Online
- 11 Max Payne 3
- 12 inFamcus 2
- 13 Final Fantasy XIV
- 14 Ratchet & Clank All 4 One
- 15 Dead Space 2
- 16 The Last Guardian
- 17 Tem Clancy's Gnost Recon: Future Soldier
- 18 NBA Elite 11
- 19 Dragon Aye II
- 20 F.E.A.R. 3



RATCHET & CLANK: A40



BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

Stats in this chart ap: Osy of OTX Research. All games are PSS till scheduled to release. Dec. 1, 2010, Polling period was Nov. 14, 2010, I





Is Marvel better than DC?

he comin quantiet has been thrown; watch our editors dides it but



Savs "Gifted Youngsters graduate Butterworth



No Savs the peakconditioned editor Gary Mannan

Mid-Nite, Wildcat, Black

makes the DC characters so greatfor videogames. As



3.8.2011

http://www.tecmokoeiamerica.com/troy/







Renve ancient history from both the Greek and Trojan sides in the epic Trojan War, and clash swords rith some of the greatest warriors from both armies including Achilles, Paris and Hector







XBOX 360 XBOX





Koei



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PlayStation The Official Magazine TECVIS **Quick Pitch** Apocalypse Now Race off-road-style as a modern metropolis crumbles all around. Behind the Wheel Characters and plot add depth to the MotorStorm universe. Steer Fate Visually customize cars, then trick them out with gamechanging perks





MotorStorm Apocalypse

The evolution of the destruction derby has arrived

the end of the world as we know it. Most civilians are running for cover or making good with their respective deities. Despite impeding doom, the anarchic racers of MotorStorm: Apocalypse gun their engines for one more race while the world falls apart around them. Just don't call Evolution Studios' gorgeous new 3D racer post-apocalyptic. "The beginning of the game is preapocalyptic," game director Matt Southern says. "The rest is apocalyptic!" So unlike Fallout or Mad Max where survivors kick around in the rubble of civilization, Apocalypse lets gamers put the pedal to the metal as the destruction happens. Southern calls the newly minted racing genre "urban off-road racing."

"This is a never-before-played experience," he boasts. "We've taken two discrete styles of racer—street racing and off-road racing—and shoved them through an earthquake-powered blender."

The game spans 48 virtual racing hours as The City—a fictional metropolis inspired by the left coast-is shaken to rubble. During the singleplayer festival, gamers will have the option of playing at three different difficulties, and each play will follow the path of a different racer: Mash, Tyler, and Big Dog, respectively. The lively, hand-drawn characters look like they fit somewhere between Initial D and Duke Nukem. Apart from the three protagonists, there's a slew of supporting racers—colorful characters such as Ratfoot, Chronic, and Mr. Magic-who will help add a human (albeit crazy) face to the proceedings.

That's not to say Apocalypse is going the story-driven route of a Kojima joint. "The story isn't heavy," says producer Damien Pinnock. "It's not like an RPG." Rather, snippets of plot and character are doled out in bites while the races load. The sequences are in a comicbook style with loosely animated cutouts of the characters.



Boardwalk Breakdown

Races will go down in approximately 10 different areas. Our exclusive playtest took place on the Waves of Mutilation track in the game's Boardwalk area. Racers blast through ruined docks as the sea laps at their tires. From the buildings, human survivors take potshots at the racers with machine guns. Meanwhile, a massive tornado swirls angrily in the gray sky above.

That storm isn't just scenery. As the race progresses the funnel cloud throws entire boats at the racetrack. Racers who don't react in time will slam right into the hurled vessels.

Grand instances like these break up all of Apocalypse's races. Buildings crumble and collapse, gas stations explode, and smokestacks

clear open road becomes a dead end. And sometimes the right kind of destruction can reveal new routes. In the case of The Mile High Cluba race through and over the tops of wrecked skyscrapersdrivers will discover new

passages while they're embroiled in the heat of competition.

But players won't see the more dramatic cataclysms occur during the game's 16-vehicle online races. Logistically it would make things difficult," Pinnock says. "Especially if

What's In, What's Out



In! Stereoscopic 3D

All October Descriptions and the state of th



Out! Night Racing

Fans have been begging for nocturnal races, but they didn't make the cut. "They didn't have the tech to do it before," admits producer Damen Pinnock. The graphics engine is now robust enough to handle dim lighting, but it didn't fit with Apocalypse, which before a restrict in the destruction. which relies on spotting big destruction from a distance. "It wasn't fun," Pinnock says.



Mo helmet,

protective gear...

uninsured to boot?

Wanna bet he's

inadequate

EXCLUSIVE



Motorcycle riding is not the preferred means to outrace impending doom. But one must make do with the tools at hand.

people are on different laps." The game can't have whole parts of its racetracks falling into the sea if a couple of stragglers still haven't made it past the cut-off point. Apocalypse even goes so far as to inform players of which solo races feature said incidents and which don't. That's because much of the game's story mode is packed with challenges and perks that let drivers customize the way their vehicles play. A pesky incident could get in the way of achieving some of

Perks come in three different categories: handling, boost, and combat Once earned, players can pick and choose, slotting them into customized loadouts that suit their

Apocalypse. Players ride the yo-yo between the reward of speed boosts and the risk of overheating. Traditionally engines could be cooled by splashes of water, but now air can do the same work. In Waves of Mutilation.

sheets of rain cause a constant cooling

effect allowing racers to ride their

Pinyers ride the yoryo of speed brosts and the risk of overhealing

play style. Aggressive drivers, for example, will be keen to equip the Swift Return perk, which speeds their return to the track after a wreck.

Stav Cool

those goals.

The constant courting of disaster remains the primary tension in

boosts harder, but players will need to be more resourceful on bone-dry tracks-busted water mains and hydrants will do the job. Other tracks will require racers to perform Dukes of Hazzard-like air-catching jumps to keep the motor running. "When you do a big jump and you come off the gas,

your engine cools," Pinnock says.

Another way to run an engine ragged is by ramming other racers. Two buttons now allow the driver to ram to the left or right, slamming into hapless opponents. Smart drivers can use the same aggro move to juke around obstacles. But these moves burn boost, so an overly physical driver will sacrifice speed (and risk an explosion) every time he barges his way through the pack.

Other additions to the game include a number of new vehicles including tricked-out choppers, tiny Mini Cooper clones, and high-horsepower supercars. On top of performance perks. Pinnock promises that players will be able to customize the look of their vehicles as never before. And, of course, since the end is near, as they will never get to again, 6. 5 1939 IF APA

Dev Chat

Only the world's tragic

of an amusement park.

demise can take the fun out



Our philosophy with A.I. is that it should behave as much like a real player as possible, but in a way which always aims to provide entertainment. Human players don't just try to win the race. They also taunt, attack, and interact with one another. me director.



UPDATE Format PSN ETA Q1 Pub SCEA Dev Q-Games

PixelJunk Shooter 2

Don't be alone in the dark

I t may have missed its intended fall launch target, but with fresh details about the all-new online multiplayer mode, we're convinced PixelJunk Shooter 2 will be well worth the wait.

Rather than offer traditional online modes that would stray from the established tone and mechanics of the first game, Shooter 2 pits two players against each other. with one trying to rescue survivors and the other making that heroic act as difficult as possible. Once the initial rescuer fails, players swap roles and give it another go. "We initially attempted a straight free-for-all versus mode but it lacked something," PixelJunk mastermind Dylan Cuthbert says, noting experimentation yielded the final player vs. player mode.

Augmenting the objective-based battles is an online league system, which unlocks further stages and precious coin used to place bets and purchase the 20 online power-ups and weapons in the game. Among those is the Tsunami, which flushes the screen with water and offers "a last minute chance to even the scores," Cuthbert explains, alongside what he describes as a "peculiarly intelligent homing missile."

The online mode arrives in addition to the sizeable solo campaign, which begins quite literally within the belly of a beast; includes new light and dark puzzle mechanics; and promises epic new boss battles—all of which we expect to be gleefully enjoying any day now. ANDREW HEWMEARD



So this is how Jonah felt after being swallowed by a great fish in the Old Testament. Welcome to somethingorother's digestive tract.



Once a player purchases a weapon or power-up, it's his to keep forever, and up to three in total can be equipped before each online battle.







HANDS-ON Format PS3 ETA March Pub THQ Dev Kees Studies

Homefront

Courting controversy...but with style



"Our theme in the eingle-player is: the familiar has hecome alien. You know what America looks like and then you see it in this new light: occupied, a little more worn down. You'll experience that universe in multiplayer as well. It will be saturated with Americana. Jeremy Greiner Community Manager,

W e peer out the window of the bus and see a child, crouched over the bodies of his parents. He's sobbing uncontrollably, really wailing, and for a few seconds that's all we can hear. There are ambient noises-the rumble of the bus engine, screams, gunshots-but they fade into the background. Seconds earlier we saw the boy dragged away from the adult couple who were shoved up against the nearest wall and executed by a pair of Korean soldiers; part of an army who have come to occupy North America. Welcome to Homefront.

The game's chilling plot is being written by John Milius, the man who penned the America-undersiege film *Red Dawn*. The game is set in the future, wherein a

reinvigorated North Korea takes over the bulk of Asia and then invades the U.S. But while the setting places Hamefront apart from other first-person shooters—essential in a world dominated by Call of Duty—the action manages to stand out as well.

In action, Homefront is more of a Battlefield or Killzone than Call of Duty. Shooting feels realistic, with guns having real weight and impact. Impressively, each firearm has a different feel to it and we were forced to continually swap as ammo ran out at an alarming rate. It's a subtle device, but it made us feel like the oppressed rebel doing whatever we could to survive. The action lacks polish but we hope that'll be applied before the invasion begins. ANDY MARTUP

Could Be A Contender



No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise

Paradise found?

The Premise

Make nerdy Travis Touchdown into the top hitman around by slaying the 10 best assassins in Santa Destroy, CA, a fictional openworld city filled with bizarre characters and side-quests.

The Reality

No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise offers hack-'n'-slash action using an energy sword players control with the Play-Station Move.

The Hook

Paradise updates the 2008 Wii cult classic with an HD makeover and bonus content. Plus, it's incredibly gory.

The Inspiration

Dirty Harry, Spaceballs, and Jackass inspired this eccentric adventure.

The Chances

Paradise, given its tweaks, could be even more strange and entrancing on PS3.

Format PS3 ETA Fall Pub Konami Dev Grasshopper Manufacture/Feelp



GAMES WITH GRAND CHEATS/ CHEATS/ GUIDES/FAQS & WALKTHROUGHS









HANDS-ON Format PSS ETATED 2011 Pub SCEA Dev that game company

"Our goal is to create games that express different emotions within the market, push the boundaries of games as a communicative medium, and question the assumptions about videngames and what they're supposed to be." president and co-founder, thatgamecompany

Journey

It's all about the sand, man

here most developers want to spike adrenaline and tax trigger fingers, thatgamecompany hopes to elicit emotional responses and soothe the senses. It's accomplished this with previous critical darlings flDw and Flower, and the developers plan to engage minds while relaxing muscles again with Journey. Set in expansive, sun-baked desert environments, Journey features an enigmatic protagonist made of fabric, and a far-off mountain peak. The seemingly simple goal is to reach the taunting

and towering apex in the distance.

How this is accomplished is a closely guarded secret; keeping with its ambitious design philosophy, thatgamecompany wants players' sense of discovery sparked. We do know the title's beautiful sand plays a prominent role. Whether surfing atop waves of it or trudging its dunes, interaction with the grainy stuff is integral to progression. Cloth is also important. In addition to characters being bizarre cloth-people, fabric flows from structures and can be manipulated. During our demo, we witnessed

ragged swaths colorfully rejuvenated as the avatar approached them.

True Grit The physics trickery and appealing art

ensure Journey's sand will play an important role.

Journey's mysteries can be mined in a non-conventional multiplayer mode the developer claims is neither competitive nor cooperative. Forgoing lobbies, chat support, and PSN IDs in favor of a "shout" button and do-whatyou-want approach, the game's online interactions offer an alternative to the normally frag-focused pastime. We look forward to unlocking all of Journey's tranquility-inducing secrets when it sifts through our fingers later this year, MATT CABRAL











HANDS-ON Format PS3 ETA March Pub LucasArts Dev TT Games

LEGO Star Wars III The Clone Wars

Much more than just a carbon copy

his much is true: A clone is never alone and, simultaneously, he's his own best friend. And it's good to be among friends when the clones are fighting

LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars offers more blockheads in a comical recreation of George Lucas' Star Wars, specifically its Star Wars: The Clone Wars animated TV show. By now, the offbeat, third-person-perspective platforming, combat, and puzzle solving of the LEGO game franchise are well-worn tropes. The gameplay demands switching among the various characters (each with its own special abilities) in order to beat the game's on-foot and spaceship-based segments. And this, then, is absolutely fine, because LucasArts goes that extra lightyear to add new elements to the package.

For this galactic jaunt, there's a new battle system wherein it's possible to take a Jedi warrior (say the plucky Ashoka Tanol onto one of 20 battlefields and have her drop-down a series of structures to be used for-what else-crushing the other guy in the manner of a grape before the press. There are also barracks that can mass produce clone or droid troopers. Properly placed, cannons can wreck enemy barricades, and so on. The stage, then, has been set for tremendous battles pitting clones against troopers, with LucasArts allowing for single-player wars, as well as player-vs.-player and two-player cooperative fights, GREG DRLANDO



LEGO Star Wars gets some new Force works



Super Troopers
Create an army of clones.



This Means War!
This is war on a grand scale.



New Heroes Meet plucky Jedi Ashoka Tano.



The Most Unkind Cut
Cut steel with a lightsaber.



Clone Warfare
The story's based on a cartoon.





HANDS-ON Format PS9 ETA March Pub EA Sports Dev EA Tiburon

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12 The Masters

Moving back up the leaderboard

t's a year of new beginnings for Tiger Woods, so it makes sense the game bearing his name features a bevy of new features and upgrades.

The big news for PGA Tour 12 is the addition of The Masters tournament. Augusta National is recreated to minute detail, but its presence in the game goes far beyond padding out the course list. The broadcast-style presentation perfectly captures the pageantry of golf's must exclusive tournament, and a special mode allows players to relive The Masters' nine greatest moments. Virtual duffers can also attempt to best Tiger's score from each of his five green jacket victories.

On the links, the addition of a caddy makes for improved accessibility much in the manner of Madden's time-saving GameFlow system. During our brief hands-on, the caddy offered an aggressive and conservative approach for every shot, handling club selection and leaving execution as our sole responsibility. A convenient zoom feature offered a peek at the ball's potential landing zone, but we could custom craft our own shot if neither of the caddy's suggestions were to our liking. Coupled with the welcome new ability to save matches mid-round, the system promises a gamer-friendly experience that isn't just for noobs. ROGER BURCHILL



Iconic Augusta National Golf Club makes its first appearance in a videogame, and The Masters assumes the limelight in PGA Tour 12.



The addition of a caddy aids with club and shot selection while streamlining the gameplay experience.





HANDS-ON Format PS3 ETA March Pub Tecmo KOEI Dev KOEI Canada

Warriors

Legends of Troy

A western dynasty rises

Spawned from the minds behind the *Dynasty Warriors* franchise, *Warriors: Legends of Troy* offers quality time with legendary figures from the both the Greek and Trojan participants of the Trojan War. Though the gameplay betrays its *Dynasty Warriors* heritage, the story is told in an interesting way. Each level is preceded by lore, lacing the game with bits





The old bald cheater, time, is a handy tool. The game creates levels tailored to a player's chosen time limit.



FIRST LOOK Format PSP ETA Spring Pub Aksys Games Dev Opus Studio

Jikandia The Timeless Land

Timeless? Not exactly

If the speedy challenges in Half-Minute Hero seemed too brisk, the upcoming action-adventure Jikandia: The Timeless Land offers considerable breathing room—but only if players want it. Jikandia may not be a sequel to that 2009 PSP favorite, despite hailing from the same developer, but the action-adventure game similarly makes time a focal point of the quest, by letting adventurers determine how much of it they'll have to complete each dungeon. As such,

players will never experience the same mission twice, since the game generates each dungeon's layout,

> enemies, traps, and loot based on the chosen time limit.

It's an intriguing twist that should lend loads of replayability, but it's not the only thing this RPG-flavored adventure has going for it. Jikandia's tale of a modern-day kid thrown back in time to face a

fantastical voyage is promising, plus

the retro-stylized aesthetic seems like a natural progression from the charming look of *Hero*, with a wide variety of brightly colored settings promised in the mix. And while the campaign is centered on a single hero, up to four local players can set traps and battle it out in the timed challenges of the Jikandia Coliseum mode.

Clearing the schedule to play a lengthy quest can be tough, but whether players have a half-minute or half-hour to spare, Jikandia appears ready to provide timely entertainment.

Wait Play this



Half-Winute

PSP, 2009
Only 30 seconds to save the world? No problem. With four different adventurers representing four distinct gameptay styles, this frenetic RPG is perfect for quick bursts of fun.

and pieces of important scenes from *The Iliad*, which many of us were forced to read during the Greek mythology portion of our high school English classes. KOEI has the right idea here: Fewer words, more battlefields laden with suckers in serious need of stabbing with swords and spears.

Unlike other Dynasty Warriors titles, Troy doesn't allow players to choose their own hero; rather a new one is assigned at the beginning of each chapter. Classically chronicled fights ensue, such as the epic clash between Hektor and Achilles, with the player assuming the role of the victorious side. There is no real attachment to either side in the war, because both have their respective jerks we wanted to punch in the face, but connecting with the characters doesn't really seem to be the point. Troy is about playing one of the most well known stories in history and kicking serious ass. AMMERCATE

One-Trick Pony Silent Hill: Downpour (Konami)





The latest on...

New shots, new games, new info

ChostbustersSanctum of Slime

It would be silly to ask to whom players should place the call when there's something weird. and it don't look good. It's time to suit up for another romp through New York in this PSN sequel to Ghostbusters: The Video Game. This four-player adventure focuses on a team of ghost-busting rookies sent to haunted locales to rid them of angry spirits. In the beginning of the game we were assaulted by ghastly bellboys in the lobby of a hotel/insane asylum, and the level concludes-as all games should-in the kitchen fighting a chef. Team up with friends locally or online to take on these and other oddities.









Tomb Raider Format PS3 FTA TBD 2011 Pub Square Enix Dev Crystal Dynamics

Lara Croft is back and looking super-fine in the upcoming reboot of the *fomb Raider* series. We'll see how Croft got to be so badass as we follow her through her early years, breaking into the apparently dangerous field of archaeology.



Dirt 3
Format PS3 ETATBD 2011 Pub Codemasters
Dev Codemasters

Dirt 3 has our motors revving with new environments, new cars, and a totally awesome new Gymkhana mode where players can complete challenges however they choose in an arena full of ramps, obstacles, and smashable junk.



Hard Corps Uprising
Format PSN ETA Spring Pub Konami
Day ARC System Works

Inspired by Contra Hard Corps, Hard Corps Uprising is on its way to PSN. This 2D sidescrolling run-and-gunner will have local and online co-op with voice chat support so we can scream commands at people far away.



Format PS3 ETA March 2011 Pub Electronic Arts Dev Crytek Studios

We can't wait to get our paws on the Nanosuit 2.0. The online multiplayer modes dilute the single-player suit's powers a bit, but class selections give the player a little something extra for the fight, be it invisibility, stealth decoys, or massive shockwaves.



Back to the Future The Game Format PSN ETA D1. Pub Telitale Gemes Bey Telitale Games

It's hard to believe, but it's been 25 years since the first Back to the Future film's release. Now, Marty McFly must go back in time to enlist the aid of a young Doc Brown in order to preserve the space-time continuum in this point-and-click adventure game.



▲ Massive Heroics Defying some early

for? Check back next

issue for a full report.

Reaction What's strong and what's wrong ▲ Portable Power Powerful and heautiful. But is the PSP2 everything we hoped

negative buzz, DC Universe Online proves MMOs can work on PS3.

▲ Sedentary Lifestyles

▼Desperate

Double Fine does

THQ needs to see

it locks down the dev's next two games.

Habushkas

it again with

Stacking, but

Gut

With GamesRadar's cheats app. we don't have to leave our couches to find a FAO.



Spare Parts

Format PSN ETA 01 Pub Electronic Arts Dev EA Bright Light Robot pals Mar-T and Chip need to get off the planet they've been dumped on. Finding parts for the crashed spaceship (voiced by Simon Pegg) seems to be their only option in this cooperative Ratchet & Clank-ish endeavor. We await a future full of both rock 'em and, of course, sock 'em.



El Shaddai Ascension of the Metatron Format PSS ETA Q2 Pub Ignition Ent. Bev Ignition Tokyo

El Shaddai mixes biblical mythology and Lucifer's designer clothing with an action-adventure story blended with platforming elements. And that's not even half the goodness to come in this gorgeous-looking game.



Naruto Shippuden Kizuna Drive Format PSP ETA Spring Pub Namco Bandai Dev Namco Bandai

Lord knows Orochimaru has tried, but you just can't keep the orange-clad ninja down. Naruto's back in a new story, with multiplayer festivities in which players get to design their own ninja dream team.



Portal 2 Format PS3 ETA April Pub Valve Dev Valve

As if a whole new solo adventure wasn't enough, Portal 2 also features a cooperative mode in the form of two robotic companions completing ridiculous tasks set out for them by the utterly insane GLaDOS.

Vit's Called PSN for a Reason

GameStop wants everyone to go to its stores to buy PSN content. Why?

VGame Movie Meltdowns

Asteroids and Missile Command are being developed as big-budget movies. We don't need no stinking plots!





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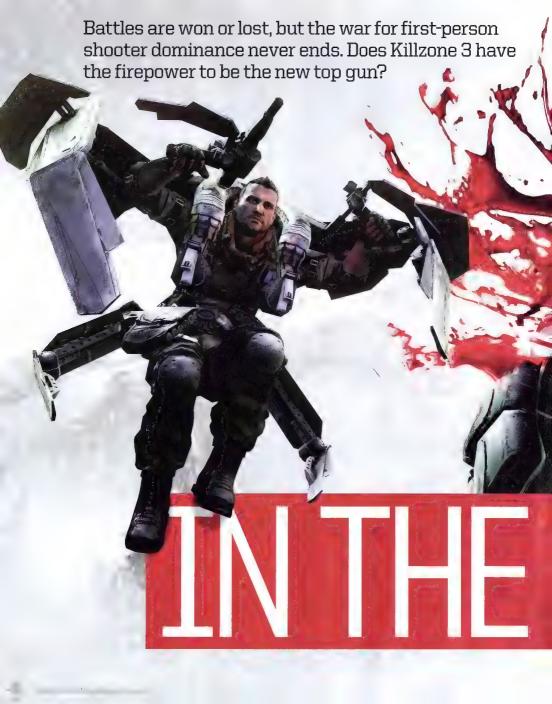






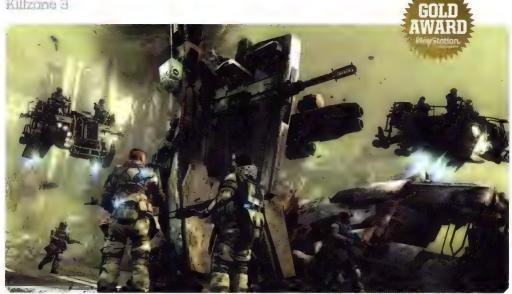


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Killzone 3

The cutting edge of combat

here's an art to creating an exceptional blade; to forming a weapon strong and true, capable of holding an edge, but flexible enough to absorb massive impacts without cracking or breaking; to fabricating a tool of exquisite balance, so that it may be easily wielded and perform its purpose with lethal efficiency. Shaping such a blade requires knowledge and experience, time and passion. It's not just a process, it's a journey.

The journey, for *Killzone*, began in 2004 on the PS2 as a competent but unremarkable effort, memorable more for its story scenario than its gameplay—the equivalent of a



workaday knife purchased from some home shopping channel. It continued on the PSP in 2006's Killzone: Liberation with an incremental sharpening of action and storyline. But it wasn't until 2009's visually charged Killzone 2 that the franchise was finally honed into a combat-ready blade

Killzone 3 takes that blade, jams it into a Helghast's eye socket, and twists it.

Back in Hel

Scolar Visari is dead. Our apologies if we spoiled the ending for those who've yet to play *Killzone 2*, but the demise of the megaloma-





niacal Helghan emperor is only the beginning in *Killzone 3*: the war is far from over.

For the Helghast, the power vacuum left by their enigmatic leader requires filling. In contention: Admiral Orlock and ambitious arms industrialist Jorhan Stahl. The power struggle offers new insight into the Helghan hierarchy, a society on the brink of civil war, barely held together by both faction's common hatred of the Interplanetary Strategic Alliance (ISA). Despite the devastation wrought on Helghan, the Helghast have revealed only a small portion of their military might, and fueled by Stahl Arms' newly developed weapons technology, they stand poised to wreak their vengeance on the ISA far beyond the confines of their homeworld.

The remaining ISA troops, in contrast, have lost contact with Earth and are solely focused on survival as they fight for their lives.
Returning Killzone 2 combat commander Captain Narville has transformed the depleted force into a guerrilla army that strikes when it can, but primarily hides and avoids major engagements with the Helghast. Yet, as months go by, the situation has become



Killzone 3 takes a blade, jams it into a Helghast's eye socket, and twists it

increasingly desperate, forcing Narville to order a dangerous infiltration of a downed ISA cruiser to reestablish communication with Earth.

But our focus is on sergeants Tomas "Sev" Sevchenko and Rico Velasquez. The firstperson action in *Killzone 3* is played from Sev's perspective, in concert with the intense,

but unpredictably volatile, Rico. As is expected of a cover shooter the gameplay is combat-focused, but one of Killzone 3's major accomplishments is its story presentation and character development. Gorgeously rendered cutscenes that feature superb voice acting do a wonderful job of expanding upon the Killzone universe and revealing the motivations of the characters. The

relying more on atmosphere and presentation than plot ingenuity, but the core players now feature a depth and humanity to them that was lacking in the previous game. Rico in particular has evolved into an intense, dynamic leader where he once seemed a selfish, irresponsible a-hole. Yes, Killzone 3

story itself isn't particularly original,

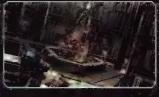
actually succeeds in rectifying the previous game's greatest flaw; it actually makes us care for the characters.

Beyond the backdrop of the narrative, the actual story arc through the gameplay is one frantic, unrelenting ride. Killzone 3 grabbed us by the scruff of the neck, tossed us into battle, and pummeled us with level after level of pure intensity, alternating among frenetic

foot-bound firefights, airborne combat, armored confrontations, high-speed rail-shooter sequences, and some truly epic set-pieces. There were also occasional stealthy segments that finally afforded us the opportunity to slow down and admire Killzone 3's genre-leading visuals, but the cumulative

experience remained a constant

leap from the frying pan into the fire and back again. We were there while playing; running, shooting, fighting, as if our fellow troopers were constantly screaming, "60! 60! 60!" in our ears. When a shooter can convey the adrenaline-fueled rush of combat by inspiring a tunnel-visioned focus on the enemy's extermination and our own survival, it has succeeded



Online Ops

The three match types in Killzone 3 include twists and interpretations of familiar deathmatch and capture-the-flag modes, but it's the integration of story, brutal melee kills, and the ability to man Exoskeletons and jetpacks that jacks up the intensity of online matches.



Guerrilla Warfare 16 player

Killzone's standard team deathmatch mode, with victory determined by hitting a preset body count or getting the most kills in a time-limited match. There are a million ways to die, but having our throat slit from behind felt extra personal.

Warzone 24 player

Warzone cycles through five different missiontypes during each match, requiring quick shifts in tactics and playstyle. Most of the missions are CTF variations, but, being the marked man in Assassination was particularly tense and enjoyable.

Operations 24 player

Killzone 3's most compelling MP mode, Operations consists of a series of mission objectives like planting explosives or breaching doors. Achieving for denying) an objective triggers story cutscenes featuring top in-match performers that contributed to the cause.



Into the Fire

While Killzone 3 excels at immersing us in its mood and momentum, a first-person shooter is ultimately judged by its gameplay mechanics. The finest examples of the breed, like Quake, Half-Life, the Call of Duty games, all manage to convey a unique sensation that's particular to each franchise. It's a feel that's achieved in large part, we suspect, by a microscopic attention to detail and a relentless pursuit of perfection. And like our proverbial blade, it's a level of refinement and development that Guerrilla Games has honed to a razor's edge in Killzone 3.

Everything in the game has a satisfying heft to it. Weapons in particular have a perceptible weight to them, so swinging a light machine qun around to bear on a target takes a fraction



Graphic cutscenes make melee kills feel so...personal

of a second more than with a submachine gun. How's it done? From our observation, there are minute variations in the time from when the aiming reticule lands on a target and the weapon animation brings the barrel in line. It's a seemingly minor detail but it imparts every pistol, machine gun, assault rifle, and launcher in the game with its own unique feel. Other elements like muzzle flash, recoil, and rate of fire seem to factor into the equation as well and are especially noticeable when using the more futuristic weapons like



🖪 At times, it's difficult to tell who're the bigger threat to Helghan: the power hungry Orlock and Stahl, or Rico and Sev.

the Arc Cannon and WASP rocket launcher available later in the game.

The communication of mass and physics carries over to Killzone 3's vehicles. The mech-like Exoskeleton and jetpack have been widely publicized, but we also hopped into an ISA tank, an armored hot-rod-like Hammer, the snowmobile-on-steroids Ice Saw, and a ride we won't specify, but that's not confined to Helghan's atmosphere. Not all of the transportation is freely navigable, but even the rail-shooter-based vehicles were a blast, with each offering a uniquely satisfying way to explode enemies. Our one lament is that only the Exo and jetpack are available for use in multiplayer.

But nothing Illustrates Killzone 3's visceral feel better than its brutal melee kills. Whereas Killzone 2's melee attacks were limited to the standard smash of a rifle butt or a slash of a knife, the new garne's attacks revolve around a series of graphically violent cutscenes depicting neck snapping, knife insertions, and even eye gouging. There are probably only a half-dozen animations all told,





but contextual camera shifts prevent the sequences from feeling stale or recycled. It's actually quite amazing how engaging this small element is, and how it manages to make melee kills feel so...personal. This feeling carried over to multiplayer as well—succumbing to a brutal melee from a live opponent made us blind with lust forvengeance.

The one area in which Killzone 3 strays from its adherence to realistic physics is in player movement. As befitting soldiers in full battle gear, motion in the previous game seemed a tad heavy-footed with a sprint that was more akin to a trot than a dash. The pace has picked up in Killzone 3 and, while some may decry it as unrealistic, it imparted a heightened sense of urgency when we broke for our next cover spot or tried to close distance on an enemy. From our perspective, the increase in gameplay tempo and responsiveness is worth any perceived trade-off.

Major Engagement

A peculiar and unexpected side effect of playing Killzone 3 was how we found ourselves comparing the game to Sega's recent third-person cover shooter Vanquish as much as we compared it to top-tier first-person shooters like COD: Black Ops. While Killzone 3 lacks Vanquish's outright focus on speed and acrobatics, both games share a sci-fi future-war theme with a focus on coverbased combat and, at times, epic confrontations against colossal enemies. While we enjoyed Vanquish, it's exactly those two common elements that distinguish Killzone 3.

The cover system simply works better than those in other games. It's incredibly smooth and intuitive, allowing for blind shots and letting us peek from behind cover with a simple prod of the Left-analog stick to deliver fire. There was a minimum of the finicky stickiness inherent to

these systems—the imprecision and fussiness that often results in our death when we intended to stay behind or break from cover. The only complaint we have about the system is the lack of the ability to lie completely prone as in a *Call of Duty* game, a feature we especially crave for multiplayer matches.

And white we're a little reticent to go into too much detail, we can't help but gush about the confrontation with the MAWLR that occurs in the final quarter of the game. It's an epic ground and airborne face-off against a 280-foot-tall mechanized arachnid that seemingly never ends, and one of Killzone 3's signature moments. But it also highlights our biggest gripe about the game: With a campaign that can be played through on easier settings in a mere five or six hours, those signature moments fly by. Ratcheting up the difficulty level will extend playtime, but we were left craving more of Killzone 3's unrelentingly intense gameplay.

Then again, multiplayer increases the play value exponentially. Practically every area of the online multiplayer, from streamlined matchmaking to a more robust 45-rank reward system, has been upgraded and improved as well. Again, we're greedy for more than the eight maps that come on the game disc, but here's hoping a map pack DLC will follow in short order. Since tastes and preferences vary, we can't say Killzone 3's multiplayer is better than Black Op's, but it's comparable and brings some welcome new twists to the battlefield.

Considering the exceptional level of scrutiny, polish, and care evident in every

PlayStation

aspect of Killzone 3's gameplay and presentation, it's easy to see that Guerilla Games and its franchise are at the top of their game. The blade shines brightly and with a razor's edge; the time for killing is here, noone ungentil.









MAP RECON

Get a competitive edge with these strategies and tips for *Killzone 3's* seven other multiplayer maps.

Map 1: Corinth Highway

- When running from an enemy Exo, head for areas that are too small or confined for it to follow.
- Taking the route under the highway is safer then taking the route over the highway.

Map 2: Pyrrhus Crater (Warzone)

- Proximity mines can be very effective in guarding the narrow Tactical Spawn Area (TSA) area
- The ISA science stations can be protected from the inside. Just be careful to exit before the charges go off.
- Avoid the lines of sight of the miniguns in the central building.

Map 3: Bilgarsk Boulevard (Warzone)

- It's easier to protect both Search & Destroy
- placements by taking the high ground.

 The bridges at either end of the street are good
- spots for Marksmen.
- Avoid being out in the open on the main street by using the back alleys.
- Marksmen can effectively cover the center crater from the bridges at either ends of the leve...

Map 4: Turbine Concourse

- The TSAs in this map have a big impact on which faction eventually wins the match. Take them as soon as possible.
- There is a switch to deactivate the EMP blast.
 Locate it and you can earn extra XP as well as gain an advantage by deactivating it.

Map 5: Frozen Dam

- Do your best to stay out of the central area under the dam. It's open ground with little cover and can become a lethal kill zone.
- A lot of the interior spaces have decrepit roof structures so players are still vulnerable to a wellplaced mortar strike.

Map 7: MAWLR Graveyard [Warzone]

- If the speaker spawns in the crusher during S&R, it can be used as bait to crush enemy players.
- A cloaked Marksman waiting at the crush button might not be seen by someone running through the crusher.

Map 7: MAWLR Graveyard (Operations)

- The tunnel under the crusher can be used to
- quickly get from one side of it to the other.

 During SCaR (Scavenge and Retrieve), have part of the team stay and defend the battery dispenser while others deliver the battery to the power core.

Map 8: Kaznan Jungle

- The numerous caverns in this level make for prime kill zones. Navigate around them if you can, but tossing in a grenade lespecially from above) can be an easy way to frag multiple enemies.
- Plenty of dark nooks and crannies make the melee-minded infiltrator and Marksman particularly effective.
- Strategic placement of turrets by Engineers can make all the difference in this constricted, disorienting map.

Career Plan

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of Killzone's career classes is key to combat effectiveness. Learn each career's characteristics and then play within them.

Infiltrator

Make sure not to activate the disguise while running with your own faction—it's a dead giveaway. Flank the enemy team and then deploy your disguise to wreak, maximum havoc but, remember, the Tacticians' Spot & Mark ability can reveal your true identity to enemy players.

Marksman

Once the Marksman's secondary abilities have been leveled up, he will protect any nearby faction mates from showing up on the enemy radar when an enemy Tactician uses his Spot 6 Mark ability. This makes the Marksman not only great at distance but, for Bodycount in particular, extremely effective at close-range while leading the team in under enemy radar.

Engineer

Deploying your turnet on high ground maximizes its effectiveness. Turnets are also really handy for defending Capture 8 Hold and Search & Destroy areas. The Engineer can also maintain the health of an Exoskeleton so stay close by to provide maximum support whenever a teammate mounts an Exo.

Tactician

Tactical Spawn Areas (TSAs) play a talling role in which faction wins a round-the greater the number of Tacticians capturing a TSA, the quicker it will be captured. The Tactition's Sentry Drones are the ideal defenders for Search & Destroy objectives and Capture & Hold areas.

Field Medic

The ultimate support class. If you've leveled up your secondary abilities then you'll automatically speed up the health regeneration process for any nearby teammates. But the Medic's ability to survive bleedout can spring a nasty surprise on the enemy faction. If the Medic is not executed while laying wounded on the ground, he is able to stand up at the location (once the respawn timer expires) and surprise an unwitting enemy. This ability can only be used once per round.



Brutal Interrogation

Guerrilla's game director Mathijs de Jonge takes us into the Killzone

What's your favorite moment in Killzone 3?

It's when the space flight sequence starts. To me it gives a great sense of achievement—although at that point, the game isn't over yet. You know you're getting close to your initial goal, getting off that planet. It works great.

The language seems to be toned down a bit from Killzone 2, but the violence— especially the graphic melee kills—seems ratcheted up a notch. What's the thinking behind that?

When we started on Killzone 2, we had the idea to give the characters different personalities and being profane was one attribute that we thought was a way to differentiate some of them. But when we finally determined it wasn't the brightest idea, it was too late to take it out. For Killzone 3, we simply said no more swearing or cursing unless a character has a very good reason for it and it fits the situation.

The melee in *Killzone 2* was functional but it was never as intense and in-your-face as we wanted it to be. So we created a system that



basically glues characters together to allow their animations being played in sync and from the appropriate angles. The first iterations had quite gentle stomps to the face and it didn't really trigger any emotional response in the player. Only when we had the player swap to his knife to take down the enemy did it start feeling right and do justice to its name: brutal melee.

The Arc Cannon and the WASP are new weapons, but the Electricity Gun has disappeared. Any particular reason why it was removed?

That gun comes with a rather elaborate electricity system that we couldn't see fitting into any of the missions in Killzone 3. With the addition of the new guns like the WASP that fires a swarm of missiles and the Arc Cannon that turns enemies into goo, we felt we included sufficient variety and excitement and didn't need to spend the extra effort on supporting the Electricity Gun.

Can you point to one particular element that's your proudest achievement?

It's the moments when all the play actions are chained and combined. Dodge enemy fire, slide into cover, vault over it, stab an enemy in the eye—Rico shoots some extra bullets into him to make sure he stays down—and you think,

"Wow, that was awesome!" This is emergent gameplay—gameplay that gives you a thrill

How did 3D and Move integration affect the development process?

Although those features make the game bigger—you have to test more options/ combinations—it didn't have a big effect on the





powerful Exoskeletons. These wouldn't "fit" in a contemporary-style game, which is a shame for them because they add lots of fun!

What's your favorite class or loadout setup for multiplayer?

My current favorite is the Marksman. I love sniping from across a map and then using the cloak suit to relocate and stay out of danger.

development process itself. What we did for Move, for example, is that we had a dedicated senior programmer and senior game designer working together on the design and implementation from start to finish. They owned that feature and also attended external playtesting to see what worked and what didn't. We started early on both 3D and Move so we had a lot of time to make it really good rather than a quick patch at the end. Regarding difficulty balancing for Move, we didn't implement anything special for the Move other than a user-configurable locking system-which is there to help players that are new to shooters and the DualShock controller. At the same time, hardcore players can switch off the locking system since it would make the game too easy for them.

Any secrets in the game that you'd care to reveal?

Few know that you can actually knock over enemies when you perform a slide move. It's a great way of taking enemies down—or making them fall out of windows.

The Call of Duty franchise currently sets the standard for console FPS online multiplayer. How do you think Killzone 3 stacks up to the competition? What differentiates its multiplayer?

Apart from the fact that Killzone 3 is very accessible to every type of gamer, it is the blend between sci-fi and realism that gives the game an edge over the competition. In other games, players often feel as if they're just a floating gun, taking down enemies. Killzone 3, however, feels much more realistic as the guns actually feel like they have weight. The sci-fi setting also allows us to go crazy in terms of what players can do, like fly agile jetpacks or drive the





Mission Play

Pay attention to the active mission during multiplayer matches. Some career classes are stronger than others for specific mission types.

Search & Destroy

The Infiltrator, once leveled up, is faster than any other class. Once his primary abilities have been fully leveled up, he is also faster at placing and defusing bombs, making him the power player in Search & Destroy.

Tacticians and Engineers can provide excellent defense of a Search & Destroy location. Placing a proximity mine over the location where a D-Charge is to be placed is an excellent tactic regardless of whether you are attacking or defending.

Capture & Hold

The Tactician, once leveled up, can take Capture 8 Hold areas faster than any other class, Multiple Tacticians will result in much faster capture times.

Engineers provide the ideal defense for Capture 6 Hold with a well-placed Sentry Turret.

Bodycount

If the Tactician has leveled up his secondary abilities, he will be able to spot and mark all enemy players on the radar. Additionally, all enemy players within 30 meters will be marked on all your team's HUBs, making the Tactician the ideal class for Bodycount.

Assassination

A fully leveled up Marksman can remain cloaked until he makes a kill, making him the ideal career class for Assassination.

Boarch C Batrione

Play Search 6 Retrieve like a game of football—gain as many yards for your team as possible. When you collect the speaker, get it as close to the return, location as you can.

Using the Infiltrator or Medic will make the job a little easier. The Infiltrator is slightly faster than other classes and the Medic's faster health regeneration allows him to absorb more damage. feature

Superhero Showdown

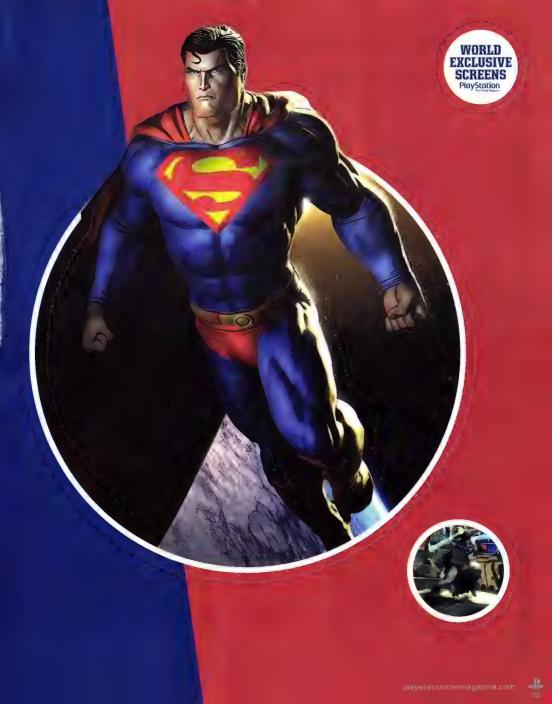


cace front, true benever his time for a fantastic feature in the Mighty Marvel (and decidedly delicious) DC Comics style. Comic-book heroes and villains are taking over the videogame world, and PTOM has got the inside ecopp on a sensational sextet of titles, Set ready, because the clock on the wall suggests it is, in fact, clabbering time









Captain America Super Soldier

Have shield, will travel

hen it comes to superheroes, a lot can happen in two minutes: a world can be saved, a disaster averted, a damsel relieved of her distress. Two minutes with Sega producer Morgan Roberts, however, is all it takes to prove Captain America: Super Soldier is more about red, white, and blue than green—a game worthy of its hero, rather than a licensed cash-cow used to trick money out of unsuspecting moms and aunts on the hunt for a birthday present.

There's no questioning Roberts' credentials as a man raised on comic books, although he admits Captain America wasn't his superhero of choice growing up: "I used to have a poster on my wall of Wolverine, claws extended. coming down on Captain America, I was like. 'Wolverine would kick him! He'd tear him apart!" Despite this, working on Super Soldier was just the nudge he needed to delve deeper into the history of the star-spangled Avenger. "As I got involved in the project I started reading a lot of the backstory that [Ed] Brubaker did, introducing Bucky as the Winter Soldier and leading to Civil War," he explains. "That's what gave me the inspiration and what got me excited."

While it's reassuring to know the man in charge is aware of the history, Roberts doesn't want to be weighed down by it. Rather than trying to retell the story of this summer's movie, Captain America: The First Avenger, Sega is moving in an entirely different direction. "Early on we were like, Okay, we'll have to meet the schedule, but we can do a completely unique story. Let's branch out, introduce new characters you're not going to see in the movie, do a completely different

storyline." The team went to additional lengths not usually found in a movie tie-in "We got Christos Gage, who's a Marvel writer he's written Iron Man, he's written Captain America. [He] has an extreme knowledge about the lore. He wrote a fantastic story that we sent to Marvel...and they said, 'This is awesome, go with it."

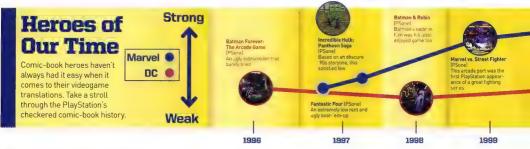
Brutal Legend

Gage's narrative takes place inside a massive citadel under the control of the HYDRA antagonists; a deliberate move on the part of Sega to limit action to a particular location. "We want to constrain you by setting up this castle, which will be like Rapture in *BioShock* or something, but completely with its own identity," Roberts says. Instead of the art-deco sheen of Rapture, though, Cap gets to swing his shield in a sprawling, inescapable gothic playset. [That tinkling sound? That's the *Batman: Arkham Asylum* bells ringing.]

The gameplay influences on Soldier are clear. We viewed the game at an early stage, but it appears to be executing its moves with a pleasingly simple brutality. It's a crisply segmented mix of combat, puzzles, and acrobatics, with the action framed by telling camera angles and zooms to emerging enemies. The context-sensitive combat looks particularly sharp, slowing down the action for compound-fracturing close-ups of the biggest hits. To set him apart from the knuckle-dusting thuggery of Batman, Cap's moves revolve around his iconic shield. Moraan explains:









Samman Sammann





Wimpy Steve Rogers became Captain America after volunteering to take an injection of Dr. Erskine's Super-Soldier syrum.

Combat looks particularly sharp, slowing the action for compound-fracturing close-ups

"(We) integrate the shield into everything he does. He uses it almost like a kung fu artist would use a prop; he smashes people with it, he'll take out whole a group of guys by spinning around and hitting, he smashes it into the ground to stagger everybody." It makes the batarang look like a child's Halloween toy; a Stark-designed indestructo-Frisbee that Cap can use at range to clatter groups of enemies, before it miraculously returns to hand. If timed correctly, Cap can even knock bullets back at armed goons, a trick players will need to tearn in order to get past certain sections. Much like

his scowly DC Comics rival, the takedowns are brutal, but Cap's attacks have a shining glimmer of justice about them. It takes a special kind of hero to make it seem heroic to jam a metal disc into the base of an enemy's skull, but Captain America pulls it off.

Close Comparisons

Comparisons with the Dark Knight's last outing aren't unfounded, or unwanted. "Arkham was a fantastic game, brilliant game," Morgan says. "But we actually started before we'd ever seen it." Despite this, Morgan

accepts that when Sega finally did see Asylum, it took on board some of the things the game clearly did well. "Instead of getting really upset, we were inspired by it."

From what we've seen, there are still areas that will need their vibranium polished—locations can feel sparse compared to the grimy claustrophobia of Asylum, and there's a danger of combat becoming repetitive. However, if Cap has indeed watched Batman's moves closely enough, this shouldn't be a problem. In a universe where tie-in games often have all the depth of Thin Man lyes, he is a real superherol, Soldier may yet have the skills to athletically vault over the competition. Or, at the very least, bedazzle the competition with its embrace of the punching spirit of the American fighting soldier.



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DC Universe Online

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Fistheart!

confession: I am Fistheart The Explodinator. Oh, but *DC Universe Online*, the PS3's first massively multiplayer online role-playing game, has a letter cap for superhero (and supervillain) names, forcing me to contract my magnificent nom de guerre to FisthearttheExplodi; someone is getting punched by my Fistheart over this

Fistheart is a jovial sort, oftentimes humorously reminiscing about his great criminal works, which predominantly revolve around his gloved fists being rammed into some miscreant's poorly washed face. DCUO allows for character customization in many ways, and it seems fitting Fistheart might do

well to emulate, personality-wise, his comical mentor, the clown prince of crime, aka Batman's foe, the Joker. As a classical villain, Fistheart wears a top hat and monocle, but only because fashion dictates such. And it is impossible to confirm or deny Fistheart also has an afro, because no one—and I mean no one—would dare try to divest this treacherous blackquard of his hat.

These choices, as with characteristics such as body type and personality are purely aesthetic, and don't influence Fistheart's powers or fighting prowess. They help flesh out Fistheart's evil magnificence, much as Fistheart's occasional bouts of talking about Fistheart in the third-person does.





Heroes and villains in DCUO can choose a mentor, power and movement sets, and a weapon. This chap here has machine guns,

Do-gooders tremble in fear of Fistheart's insensate evil and his suitably malevolent superhuman abilities. Each superhuman in DCUO can select his powers from some preset categories: mental, ice, nature, gadgets, sorcery, and so on. These power sets can be upgraded, of course, through heroic or villainous deeds. Similarly, each hero must choose a movement type (superspeed, flight, or acrobatics) and a weapon (projectile or melee). These, too, can be improved over time.

As befitting a criminal supergenius, Fistheart's powers are psionic in nature. He can use telekinesis to befuddle foes and cast illusions to hide his true form. And because, as The Fresh Prince Will Smith noted, a good run is better than a bad stand any day, Fistheart is possessed of superhuman speed. His chosen weapon is the hand blast, which, as its name suggests, is rather explosive.







This Is a City of Crime

Gotham City has its crime alley, its trainyards, its industrial sewer of a river, its seedy bars where criminals and miscreants gather. It's the perfect first stop for Fistheart on his way to world domination.

The city is under siege. Would-be conqueror Brainiac has dispatched his robots to capture Gotham's citizens and wreak havoc. Criminals, both human and metahuman, are mugging citizens, planting bombs, and using the populace for their villainous experiments. Recognizable DC Comics heroes and fiends

dole out missions. Futuristic hero Booster Gold lasks his charges with taking a tour of Gotham's blight. The Joker offers a reward for blowing up cop cars and booby-trapping the five-oh. Catworman plans to steal stuff, and could use a villainous presence to serve as a diversion.

Fistheart approves, reservedly, of the free-flowing combat, which encourages creative thinking while only requiring hammering on the attack buttons. Powers can be combined in delightfut ways; Fistheart enjoys lifting foes with telekinesis and then using powered blasts to hammer on them while they're paralyzed. And even defeat—something Fistheart cannot fathom the concept of, let alone will ever experience—is no great matter. Fallen superhumans drop to their knees and are given a few seconds to think about it, they are then allowed to restart from a safe house.

A criminal could get used to this kind of treatment. And Fistheart is magnanimous enough to think a hero could, too.



My Fist, My Heart!

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As befitting a criminal supergenius, Fistheart's powers are psionic in nature



Fantastic Four (PS2)
Shout as bad as the movie,
only with worse acting from
lessica Alba



Punisher (PS2) A thoroughly M-rated Jame, it successfully ranslated Punisher's Trutality



Marvel Ultimate Alliance (PS2/PSP/PS3) X-Men Legends gameplay comes to the Marvel Universe and it's a pretty great fit



Justice League Heroes P52/P5PI JC tries a Baldor's Gate knockoff, but can't match Marvet Ustimate Alliance



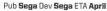
X-Men III: The Official Game (PS2) Taking place between the second and third films, it was a weak





Superman Returns IPS2I Releasing months after the It m.S. perman, adventure were a bottom slop





Thor God of Thunder

o casual fans of the Marvel comic book hero Thor, it never made any sense why he would be matched up against run-of-the-mill superheroes. He's a god after all, who carries a hammer capable of leveling mountains and controls the very elements of thunder and lightning. But Thor as we see him in the upcoming movie directed by Kenneth Branagh and the upcoming videogame Thor. God of Thunder is a bit more down to earth. Or at least he is when he comes to visit from his alien world of Asoard.

Thor still has upgradeable god powers at his disposal, like the aforementioned thunder and lighting, along with powerful control over the wind, which he'll use to great effect along with his potent hammer to defeat the evil forces unleashed—somewhat accidentally—by his brother, the trickster Loki. Both Thor and Loki are voiced by the actors

who portray them in the movie, Chris Hemsworth and Tom Hiddleston, respectively. A third-person brawler at heart, Thunder takes gamers on an adventure across a larger expanse of the Thor universe than will be seen in theaters, following a story co-written by Matt Fraction, the scribe behind the comic.

Enemies are massive and challenging, giving

players a bit more meat than found in the

typical hack-and-smasher. Upgrading Thor's god powers and collecting runes and other items add a healthy dose of exploration to the gameplay

Cooperation among Sega, Marvel, and the filmmakers should ensure a certain thematic cohesion between the properties, but don't expect ist play the movie. This is an entirely new

to just play the movie. This is an entirely new adventure for the tow-headed deity that should give fans of the comic an adventure worthy of the universe they know and love.





Pub Activision Dev Silicon Knights ETA TBD 2011

X-Men Destiny

rofessor X is dead and the human/ mutant conflict is more intense than ever as X-Men Destiny's story opens in a divided San Francisco. The future looks bleak when we meet our in-game avatar at a peace rally. Players will choose from three onlookers in the crowd and it will be around this choice-and all following choices, big and small—that X-Men Destiny is built, "Decision moments" are littered throughout the game and will allow us to pick our own powers, form alliances (or betray them), and determine our destiny, including whether we side with the X-Men and fight for peace, or with Magneto's Brotherhood and the mutant uprising. Familiar faces will be seen throughout the game-Magneto, Cyclops, and Wolverine, to name a few-but our unknown newcomer is the focus of this action-RPG.





Pub Warner Bros. Interactive Ent. Dev Double Helix ETA June.

Green LanternRise of the Manhunters

fter years of Batman and Superman hogging the silver screen, the Green Lantern is finally getting a chance to shine in a blockbuster of his own this summer. Accompanying the film is a game based in the same universe, Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters. The game also features the original Green Lantern Hal Jordan, as played by Ryan Reynolds, and follows the intergalactic, ring-wielding police force when they battle the robotic scourge of the Manhunters.

The combat system aims to take advantage of Green Lantern's powers, which seems like a tall order given these heroes blast green energy from their rings to create anything they can think of. The Lanterns in the game will be primarily focused on creating objects that

smash the crap out of robots, so it's more than likely we'll see classic Lantern constructs like Hal's giant green fist.

Just as the film takes inspiration from comic stories, the game will also have characters and places familiar to DC Comics' more avid readers. The Manhunters themselves are classic villains, the original space protectors before they went genocidal, and the devs are working with legendary DC scribe Marv Wolfman to include even more lore. Taking a cue from the comics, Hal is supported by some of his pals, like gruff Lantern drill instructor Kilowog, and the cooperative mode has Hal working with friend, fellow Lantern, and future arch nemesis Sinestro. With a film and his first solo game, 2011 looks to be the biggest year ever for the ring-slinger.

in 400 button Superiori Slowdown



Pub Warner Bros. Interactive Ent.
Dev Rocksteady Studios ETA Fall

Batman: Arkham City

eveloper Rocksteady let the inmates out of the asylum, Batman; Arkham City picks up where the excellent thirdperson adventure Batman: Arkham Asylum left off; with the looney bin no longer able to hold its inmates after the havoc wreaked by The Joker and assorted other asylum mainstays. New Gotham City mayor Quincy Sharp has annexed part of Batman's home turf to hold the psychotic rabble. More area equals more problems for Batman, but new gear and new abilities for his existing gadgets should give him a wing up over bad guys such as Two-Face, Mr. Freeze, and of course, the Joker. Fans should enjoy Batman's new maneuverability and the expanded abilities of the Detective made to solve crimes, but the heretofore unrevealed multiplayer mode is what really has gamers more excited than Catwoman in a sandbox

2010



2009







They're

Moet four gamers who are making artistic statements with their favorite hobby

by John Barrett

Crafty

The Crocheter

Spins a pleasunt yarn

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The Countayer

Fictitious fashion

't all started with a friend inviting Heather Dugger to an anime convention. "I had no idea that people dressed up at these events, but figured it was common if they did it at Star Trek conventions."

Her first few costumes were made with the help of her mother, but Heather's demand soon outstripped her mother's ability. The 27-year-old taught herself to sew by watching her mother's technique, but instead of using tutorials on how to cosplay-which weren't widely available at the timeshe used her artistic talent to make her outfits: "Since I'm an artist and like to draw. I would sketch out how costumes should flow. From there, I would try to find patterns that were similar and alter them."

I-No. from Guilty Gear, was one design that couldn't be made through a simple pattern alteration. Birthed from a common love of the Guilty Gear fighting game franchise, and a stock of vinvl material purchased from a clearance rack at a craft store, the costuming plans began. It was one of her most difficult and challenging designs, not only for the concept but also because of the scarcity of the materials. "I only had so much to work with," she says, "and if I messed up once I'd have to start all over again. Only I couldn't buy any more of that specific vinyl."



She knows when to hold and when to fold

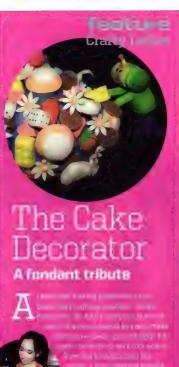
t's the ultimate blank canvas: a simple piece of paper. But in the right hands it can become the Prince of All Cosmos. That's the challenge that Jennifer Park, 26, embraces with her papercraft.

"I do papercraft because it's unique and accessible," Park says, "Sometimes at restaurants I'll leave a tip sitting on top of a lotus or crane that I've folded from a napkin. It's satisfying to take humble paper and transform it into a work of art."

Perhaps her most intriguing, and difficult, piece was a work based on the Namco game Katamari Damacy, This detailed paper sculpture features the tiny Prince of All Cosmos pushing his trademark Katamari; the ball is an origami project while the Prince is a printed pattern that's cut and folded. The two major methods of papercraft find themselves represented in this piece, which proves a nice touch.

"I'm drawn to quirky things," Park says, "Games are art and fantasy, and I like bringing other people's dreams to life. There isn't always merchandise available, so I make my own."







classes keep things interesting too.

constantly. Massive levels and a variety of vehicles and



THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK

Riddick's PlayStation 3 debut was released to no real fanfare despite offering two entire games: an HD remake of Xbox's The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay and a new adventure, The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena. These games were dark and dingy triumphs of design and provided players with frantic action, great stories, and a tremendous protagonist.

3

X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

Everyone's favorite berserker at his violent best proved to be an entertaining romp for PS3, and X-Men Origins: Wolverine defied all expectations as a great movie-to-game translation. Pouncing on enemies from afar and tearing them to shreds with our claws felt hugely satisfying, and there were a lot of comically gruesome set-pieces, like sticking a man's head into a helicopter's rotors.





5

SINGULARITY

Thanks to a few unfortunate delays and the fact that it bore more than a passing resemblance to the far superior *BioShock*, *Singularity* hit store shelves with almost no momentum. As a result, most of us missed out on its tremendously clever time-manipulation mechanics, which let players guide bullets, weaponize the environment, and even age enemies into oblivion. That, combined with a few neat set-pieces and an interesting Cold War-conspiracy storyline, earns this one a second look.





THE DARKNESS

Jackie Estacado is a New York mafioso with a dark secret: He's possessed by an ancient, parasitic demon that feeds on shadow. Under the cloak of night, Jackie can call upon his evil passenger to fuel deadly supernatural powers, which he uses to get revenge on his treacherous mob-boss uncle. Execution here is often clumsy, but using tentacles to fling cars and people around and summoning up Darkling helpers is a real thrill, giving the otherwise plain combat an edge over similar games.

Disgaea 3: Absence of Justice is one staggeringly feature-packed RPGs and the monstrously deep combat in hours of story and side content. The graphy's and distinctly language seeps.

Disgaea 3: Absence of Justice is one of the most staggeringly feature-packed RPGs ever made, and the monstrously deep combat is supported by hours of story and side content. The SNES-style graphics and distinctly Japanese sense of humor won't suit everyone's tastes, but get past them and Justice proves surprisingly funny, well-written, and engrossing. Just be sure to set aside 200 hours of spare time to play it.





that provides an arcadey twist on the third-

score. Think Tony Hawk, but with headshots.

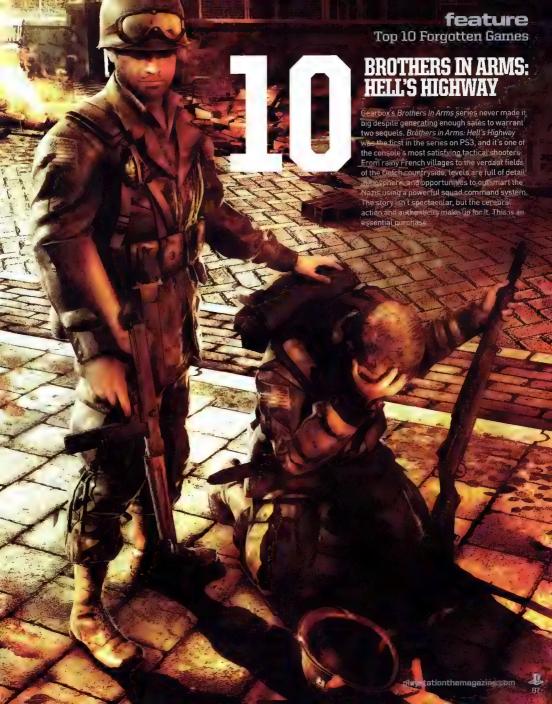
person shooter. Points are awarded for chaining

stylish kills. It's all about racking up a massive



CIVILIZATION REVOLUTION

Civilization is the epitome of the "just one more turn" game. The turn-based strategy title sees us leading a society from humble tribal beginnings to the role of a modern superpower. Players can win by conquest, diplomacy, or technological advances, and there are a thousand ways to reach each goal. But rather than just port the PC version, ZK Games designed Revolution specifically for gamepads, meaning it's streamlined and easy to play.



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Ghost of Sparta

DIAN DUKE NUKEM

BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY



ayStation.

Your essential guide to new releases

We're living in the age of the sequel Take a gander at this month's review titles. From the brawling grahdeur of Capcom's cash of universes to Atari's revival of a classic driving series, to the fantastical revival of a playful penguin, the review pages of PTOM's critique section has become a repository for factow-ups. It's good to revisit old frients of course, and w'd be hard present our critique garm companies for wanting to worl with established products in an uncertain market. And, certainly, we'll cheer when me of the signets the predecessors do yet we can't help celebrate when someone—anyone—stabs at

someone—anyone—stabs at originality. Developer Double Fine made us laugh with the offbeat Halloween adventure Costume Halloween adventure Lostume Quest, and we see more greatness from their Russian nesting doll/(we are not making this upl adventure Stacking. And Venetica, which offers a mystery and Death's daughter as the pestagnist family were as the protagonist lagain, we're not making this up brings the promise lif not the delivery) of an intriguing jaunt through medieval times.

There's plenty of room on the reviews pages. Everything, be it reworked or brand new, is welcome.



S. CAPCOM 3

er, as the mighty es with the cophanous Capcom characters in ll-out brawl. Excelsior!



TWO WORLDS II

Return to *Two Worlds*, which, undoubtedly, is a better bargain than one world. See, because it sone more world. One must give strive to be cost-conscious in these trying times.



ECHOCHROME II

Decidedly offbeat, echochrome returns for another round of what the hell is going on? Ensuring a little man's safety has never been this uh, weird.

LIBYMAN BURNEYOR THE

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- **3** (ma)

CHIAL WARD

Consideration





Marvel vs. Capcom 3 Fate of Two Worlds

So this is what it's like when worlds collide

ighting game intro sequences aren't supposed to give us goosebumps. Nobody's here for the story; we're in it for the action. Brooding, muscle-bound characters posing dramatically for a sweeping camera aren't supposed to trigger our "awesome" reflex. Yet there we were. watching Dante shoot the blade off Deadpool's sword as Morrigan and Iron Man soared past the window outside and Ryu slugged it out with Wolverine on the roof above, our eyes open wide and our jaws hanging agape. Never before had we been so excited to dive into a fighting game.

Fortunately, Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds doesn't disappoint



on any level. Though perhaps not quite as chaotic and fast-paced as Marvel vs. Capcom 2, it still feels like the gaming equivalent of a sugar-rush: bright, flashy, accessible, and fun in every sense of the word. MvC3 manages to artfully implement a much more well-rounded combat system while still retaining all the flavor and essential elements that made its predecessor such an outrageous experience. Seriously, how many other games would let us body slam a tiny knight in hilarious underpants with a gril piloting a-cartoonish green mech?

Fan Fair

As the game's intro demonstrates, MvC3 owes much of its appeal to its roster of iconic fighters, a collection culted from decades of well-loved games and comics. Marvel fanboys and devoted Capcom followers who can't resist the lure of seeing the Hulk and Chun-Li in a bare-knuckle

Baby Brawl

If MyC3's straightforward controls still aren't accessible enough, it also includes a Simple mode, which...well, simplifies the process even further. However, it also removes a lot of potential moves and techniques, so we don't recommend using it unless both players select this

option.

free-for-all won't be disappointed every aspect of the game feels like a loving, light-hearted celebration of the characters and their source material.

From Deadpool moonwalking away from his opponents to Spider-Man's constant quips while in the ring, every character displays a huge amount of personality, complete with subtle details and references that any true fan will be overjoyed to hear. The fan service even extends to the characters' alternate costumes—like Iron Man's Silver Centurion armor and Spider-Man's symbiote suit—and context-sensitive banter. Hearing Wolverine and X-23 refer to each other by their real first names (Logan and Laura, of course) before a fight gave us childs.

Thankfully, none of this should alienate the uninitiated. Those who get the references will feel totally gratified and those who don't will never even notice they missed something. It's a difficult balance to strike and Capcom









should be applauded for handling it so well.

Really the only thing fans could potentially complain about is the final character roster, which excludes fan favorites like Mega Man and Cable but includes a few baffling choices like Wolverine knock-off X-23 and long forgotten Ghosts in Goblins star Arthur. We certainly miss some of the classic MvC2 characters that were omitted, but at the same time, we've learned to love the entire cast list, including those fighters we were originally most skeptical about.

Characters Welcome

Despite the fact that we could care less about X-23 as a character, she's actually a blast to use in the game. Her speed is practically unmatched and she possesses some of the most creative moves in the game, like an unblockable long distance grab that



allowed us to punish turtling opponents. We've also become big supporters of Resident Evil's Albert Wesker. Though he could have easily been an overpowered nightmare, his moves never felt unfair and his combos are some the slickest we've ever seen. Seriously, teleporting in the middle of a combo? Awesome.

Older characters like ace mechanic Tron Bonne and the previously overpowered Sentinel have had new life breathed into them with useful new moves and options, while other returning fighters—like Wolverine, Ryu, and Iron Man—feel largely the same. Which is great. Don't fix what ain't broken, right? All in all, the roster feels incredibly robust, creative, and diverse, layered with the same kind of nuance that made Street Fighter IV such a rich experience.

It is, however, significantly smaller, down to 36 characters [38 with DLC] from MvC2's staggering 56. But this too is a good thing. MvC2 may have been have been a brilliantly fun game, but it was also about as balanced as a child celebrity. Tournament players would consistently rely on the same six or so characters because the other 50 were

Five Characters We'd like to see return as DLC



ICEMAN



MEGA MAN



CABLE



RUBY HEART

Block damage is

careful not to turtle

fairly high so be

for too long.



OMEGA RED





MvC3's Missions mode can teach us the basics, but we wish there were other more comprehensive tutorials available.

essentially useless for serious play. Such is not the case in MrC3. Though it will take time for all the balance issues to be sussed out, we never encountered a character or tactic that we couldn't beat somehow.

Flying Fists

Not only have the game's balance issues been resolved, the fighting mechanics feel far more substantial-Capcom has clearly applied the lessons it learned from its Street Fighter reboot. True, the action is markedly slower than it was in MvC2. but this makes advanced techniques like cancels, dashes, and complex combos far more useable. MvC2 often felt so chaotic that it made as much sense to resort to buttonmashing as it did to the careful application of skills. Now hardcore players are much more likely to be rewarded for their well-honed abilities.

Despite the noticeable SFIV influence, MvC3 retains all the elements that made the previous game so unique. For starters, it's still one of the most accessible fighting games ever created. The simplistic button scheme utilizes just three attack buttons of increasing strength and one "special" attack button that serves mainly as a launcher to initiate MvC's signature air combos. This easy-to-grasp control scheme combined with the wildly over-the-top moves and visuals creates an instantly satisfying experience that lets all players look and feel powerful immediately.

And of course, players can still expect the three-on-three action to get totally nuts. Screen-filling super attacks, insane triple-digit combos, and lightning-fast cross-ups—this

Cast List



Deadpool Doctor Doom Dormammu Iron Man M.O.D.O.K. Phoenix Sentinel She-Hulk Shuma-Gorath (DLC) Spider-Man Storm Super-Skrull Taskmaster Thor Wolverine X-23

CAPCOM



Albert Wesker Amaterasu Arthur C. Viper Chris Redfield Chun-Li Dante Felicia Haggar Heien-Kn Jill Valentine (DLC) Morrigan Ryu Spencer Trich Tron Bonne Viewtiful Jae

7ora

game's delightful sensory overload knows no bounds. Ally assists—which are now mapped to designated buttons, thankfully—also keep the action unpredictable while adding some serious strategy to the mix. Pulling a banged-up fighter from the ring to let him recover a little health can make all the difference in a close match, and chaining ally-assist attacks into combos is one of the most effective ways of catching an opponent off quard. See? Just like MvC2.

Fighting Words

Naturally, there have been a few changes to the formula as well, but none of them impact the experience too dramatically. For example, as a result of the game's slower pace, projectile attacks are more effective at controlling an opponents'

movement, which is especially bad news for slower bruiser-type characters and characters without air dashes in their repertoire. However, selecting a well-balanced team and utilizing the new X-Factor system— which let's player supercharge their fighters and slowly recover health once per round—can easily rectify that problem.

Unfortunately, Capcom's servers were not up and running at the time of this review, so we can't vouch for the stability of online play. But given its track record with SFIV, we have faith that any issues will be marginal.

Online or off, MvC3 is a blast. The lovably goofy presentation, the ADD-esque action, and the stunning visual style [which, by the way, looks jaw-droppingly fantastic in motion] provide an experience that could easily suck us in for a hundred hours or more. It won't have the immense impact that SFIV did and hardcore

MvC2 fans may be bitter about some of the changes, but in the end, the joy of watching our favorite characters beat the crap out of each other will always win out.





Test Drive Unlimited 2

Time for a tune-up



hen the original Test Drive Unlimited arrived in 2006, it impressed with its seamless online integration and unique openworld racing. Four years later, the sequel faces stiff competition from games that have evolved the genre with more exciting races and streamlined multiplayer. Unfortunately, Test Drive Unlimited 2's free-form racing and social focus can't mask the mediocre racer underneath its hood.

After selecting a *Sims*-esque avatar, we quickly set out to explore the Spanish island of Ibiza at triple-diqit

speeds. Instead of racing on different set tracks, Unlimited 2's racing format had us driving from point A to point B and competing on public roads, a la Grand Theft Auto's racing missions. While cruising around in Free Drive mode, new locations, races, challenges, and most importantly, warp points are unlocked. Once an area has been visited, it's simple to warp back there at any point.

The car selection is pretty broad, including some American muscle classics, some Italian exotics, and plenty of mid-level sports cars.

Cosmetic customization consists of stickers and paint jobs, and car tuning is limited to simple leveled upgrades. Graphically, the game is servicable: The cars look good, though there's noticeable background pop up as the game's draw distance isn't quite as far as it should be. Unlimited 2 does have surprisingly good lighting though; sunrise and nighttime driving actually look better than daylight driving.

Long and Boring Road

While openworld racing is appealing, it's important that the actual roads be

Timeline Previous year models



Test Drive PC, 1987 Don't laugh, five stages and five cars was state-of-the-art 1990

Test Drive III: The Passion PC, 1990 The first Test Orive game to introduce

Test Drive 6
PSone/Dreamcast, 1998
Forty-one upgradeable
vehicles that could be
purchased in any
desired order.

500

Test Drive: Eve of Destruction PS2/Xbox, 2004 A departure for the series, Destruction offered demolition

derby-style racing

200

Test Drive Unlimited PS2/Xbox 360, 2006 Openworld racing with slick multiplayer, but the PS2 version was decontented.



Looking for a little driving excitement in Unlimited 2? Just venture off the asphalt a smidge and enjoy Ibiza's scenery while traveling sideways down the road.





rewards the player with more experience points and exclusive cars.

Unlimited 2 holds some interesting online game modes, including Speedtrap, where players compete to own checkpoints by passing them at the highest speed they can muster. Follow the Leader also puts an interesting cooperative twist on the game, allowing only the leader to see where the next checkpoint is. Players must stay close to each other as the checkpoint only remains open for a short time after the leader has passed through it. Synchronized driving is a refreshing change of pace from the usual bumper car-style races, though we definitely fared better at this type of challenge when we had a dedicated crew of drivers working together.

Ultimately, Unlimited 2 offers a serviceable, but bland, openworld driving experience. Where its predecessor made its name on the strength of its, at the time, revolutionary online multiplayer integration, this game is consistently outclassed by titles such as Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit and Blur, and its static driving lacks the arcade thrills we've come to expect. Sadly, it just doesn't have the horse-

> power to pull away from its superior competitors. Consider this a case of poor advertising. It's at best a umited test drive.

interesting. Burnout: Paradise did a nice job of making its Paradise City seem like an actual town while secretly making sure there were crazy turns and jumps nearly everywhere. Unlimited 2 lacks that dynamic touch. A lot of the roads in Ibiza are simply straight slogs through the countryside. It just feels like commuting

Unlimited 2's tarmac racing has its share of practical issues that often get in the way of the fun. Because courses are just checkpoints scattered around public roads, it can be hard to spot the actual turns. The game's inconsistent



ScorePole

The hotey contested PS3 driving genre has no pole position for Test Drive Unlimited 2.

What we did in... Test Drive Unlimited 2

Admired the nighttime/dusk lighting effects 5% Wished the automatic transmission wasn't so awful



40% Idly cruised around unlocking new roads and races

5% Wandered around the many bourgeois

15% Wished there was a flashback/rewind

directly on road.

Car Club Unlimited 2's online play is still integrated well, though it's less dazzling than it was back in 2006. Other players are indicated on the map and can be directly issued challenges or invited to participate in events. Players visible on the world map are only a small slice of the available online players, so befriending people in-game and joining quild-like clubs is essential. Participating in clubs also

physics only add to the problem. Any

asphalt, it's likely to spin; we soon

learned to stay on the tarmac at all

times and not try anything risky. In

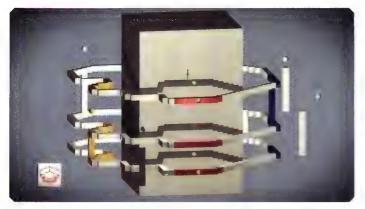
arcade-minded racer, Unlimited 2's

doing anything other than staying

pnysics actively discouraged us from

what's clearly intended to be an

time a car loses direct contact with the





Warning: echochrome ii's shadowy shifts of perspective may cause brain sprains.



echochrome ii

An illuminating puzzler

Direct Feed Stage-solving savants can share their replays-with or without the PS Eye recording in the backgroundto YouTube directly from the game. Just promise to cover up, okay?

etween the perplexing perspective-based puzzles, minimalist interface and stark, monochromatic visuals, 2008's echochrome is truly unlike any other game. That holds true even now with the sequel, which artfully knocks aside its own established rules to embrace an all-new approach.

The results are fascinating, though admittedly less engaging in practice. Rather than rotating a viewpoint to create impossible, M.C. Escher-esque pathways for a wooden doll to traverse, echochrome in casts the required PlayStation Move controller as a virtual flashlight, letting players shine a spotlight on a series of suspended blocks to manipulate elaborate shadow layouts. Since the mannequin can only walk upon shadows, players must use the light source to create combinations of platforms, stairs, and portals to quide him to the exit.

Unrestrained by the bounds of physical reality, echochrome u creates its own laws to play by, such as the ability to create an exit doorway by aligning a circle and a rectangle or make jump pads by merging a circle shadow with that of any platform. Plus, the flashlight approach offers more novel effects, with hidden shadow images found in certain stages. Though the resulting experience is undeniably unique, some stages can be passed





simply by finding the correct angles for the Move controller, robbing the experience of its intellectual punch and plunging it into bouts of monotony.

Luckily, echochrome II overcomes Its lack of excitement by offering variations on its core theme. Beyond the standard Escort mode, all 100 stages can be played in Echo or Paint: The former takes a cue from echo chrome, stranding faded dolls on multiple shadow platforms and challenging the Move wielder to find ways to guide the main character to all of them; the latter tasks players with coloring

a certain percentage of the

suspended blocks by letting mannequins run wild over the shadows.

But where echochrome ii may find its longest legs is with a LittleBigPlanet-like level creation and sharing suite, which lets players the world over concoct their own twisted puzzles and easily pop them up on the PlayStation Network. New puzzles give players an ever-growing stream of new content without an additional fee. And while the sequel adds color and rendered images to the mix, it still maintains plenty of the simple, winning aesthetic of the original, again wrapped up in crisp classical tunes.

While less engrossing—and therefore less essential—than its predecessor, echochrome ii

remains a smartly conceived puzzler that offers fresh and innovative ideas, especially when it comes to using the PlayStation Move.





X-Men The Arcade Game

Format PSN Pub Konami Dev Backbone Entertainment Price \$9.93 ESR8 Everyone 10*

This arcade port lets up to six players take up arms as their favorite spandex-clad mutant heroes and smash through a deluge of angry droids, lizard men, and badly voiced supervillians. Punching, jump kicking, and using mutant powers to violently dismantle droves of dim-witted foes grows repetitive almost immediately. It also doesn't lake very long to tear through the game's short levels, particularly when reiving on the screen-clearing powers unique to Wolverine, Storm, Colossus, and



other playable X-folks. Death comes frequently, but infinite continues completely erase the once-brutal challenge of the original arcade coin-op. 927934 MEULTER

Minis Roundup



Angry Birds Price \$3.89 ESR8 Everyone

Hurling ticked off avians via a massive slingshot in an attempt to destroy

heavily fortified pig creature structures is a maddeningly addictive pastime. Though the PSP Mini version of Angry Birds doesn't have as many levels as some other iterations, it's still a chirping good time. BUY



Blimp The Flying Adventures Price \$4.99 ESRB Everyone

Ferrying clients to docking bays scattered around

stages is a dangerous affair in *Blimp*. All the cargo hauling while hunting for items proves engrossing; throw in bombing runs, enemy ships, and perilous obstacles, and it's party time. **Bluy**

You Don't Know Jack

Format PS3 Pub THQ Dev Jellyvision Price \$39.99 ESRB Teen

Party games don't garner much respect from hardcore gamers, but You Don't Know Jack deserves an exception. Snappy production, entertaining dialogue, and genuinely mind-bending trivia questions kept us engaged. Since scores are time-based, the game's recitation of long-winded answer options seemed pointless, but its rapid-fire pace kept us challenged. The best part? Success requires associating divergent bits and types of informat on, so consistently dominating the competition



is difficult—even for a fountain of useless knowledge. Couple in 73 episodes of content at a bargain price, and it's hard not to invite.

MicroBot

Format PSN Pub Electronic Arts Dev Naked Sky Price \$9.99 ESRB Everyone

Sloshing around a human being's innards amid blood vessets, bone structures, and pulsing organic matter is an unusual setting for battle, but that's precisely where MicroBot's microscopic war between robots and bacterial infection takes place. This exploration-heavy dual-stick shooter features intriguing internal environments to motor through while zapping infectious diseases and swarms of unfriendly robotic drones. Though some patches drag on for too long, numerous unlockable upgrades



and ample customization options for the titular robotic protagonist offer compelling reasons to keep blasting through this fantastic voyage "HAN SECURE"

Mini of the Month



N.w.V.A

Inspired by the Halo franchise, the sci-fi first-person shooter action in N.O.V.A. may not be the most original game to hit the PSP Mini lineup, but it's a battle-heavy romp through alien-infested territory. A mix of blasters, automatic weapons, and explosives offer some variety for dealing out a massive helping of death to robots and alien scum across 13 stages. Buy



Two Worlds II

Welcome to a better world

ullied in reputation by its universally panned, poorly ported predecessor, Two Worlds II understandably arrives with its share of attached stigma. So it will surprise everyone who sloaged through the original to discover the sequel smashes all preconceptions like a spiked mace through a skeleton warrior's ribcage. On the wings of a new engine, refined play mechanics, and some tweaks that even evolve one of gaming's most beloved genres, Worlds II flies in the face of naysayer's expectations, offering a do-over for the fledgling franchise rather than a me-too follow-up.

Thankfully, players don't need any prior knowledge of the Xbox-exclusive Two Worlds to enjoy its far superior sequel. The story picks up five years later, but those who've hacked. slashed, and magic-casted their way through any number of fantasy role-playing games will feel right at home in this consumed-by-evil world. There's the requisite dark lord who'd



Cast List THE VILLIAN



The dark wizard Gandohar's smiting

THE ERIEND



Leader of the Orcs, he aids the hero by helping him escapi from a castle

THE MYSTERY



with a mysterious friend or foe?

prefer we didn't have a pulse, ancient treasures to unearth, minions and towering monsters to slay, non-player characters to chat up and, of course, plenty of leveling and looting to be done. While it doesn't reinvent the genre, it deftly handles most of these core concepts and mechanics.

One of Two World II's more impressive feats is how it handles character customization and progression. Aside from shaping a hero with multiple sliders, players will do little to determine the class or preferences from the outset-while the protagonist may sport the wackiest hairstyle in all the land, he's pretty much the same dude everyone else starts with. However, with progress comes experience, and soon enough the player can plug points into skills and abilities that'd make any mage, warrior, or archer envious. What separates the system, though, is the option to have any of these diverse death-dealers just a D-pad click away: a trio of entirely different weapon sets can be mapped, allowing

heroes to essentially switch classes on the fly. So when facing a pack of snarling Werbeast in the distance, the hero can don his wizard robes and magic-spitting



Mayor Brown welcomes one and all to Brownsville, where no one is ever blue.



This is Two Worlds II's version of the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.



staff to thin the threat from afar, then click over to the armor-and-broadsword set once he gets close enough to finish the job.

Complementing the ability to unleash three different brands of whup-ass on command are equally engaging magic and weapon-building systems. The former lets players combine spell cards-an ice card coupled with an area-of-effect card, for example, equals a screen full of frozen foes-while the latter lets players break down useless loot and mine it for valuable raw materials. Both work intuitively and add inventiveness and depth to staple concepts the devs could just have easily cribbed from the classic RPG handbook.

Despite the surprisingly solid gameplay, not all is perfect: Animations are stiff, close combat can feel clunky, and the voice-acting's more miss than hit. That said, there's enough quality content, including a

> detail-drenched presentation buoyed by top-notch physics, and a roughly 30-hour-plus quest to keep armchair adventurers busy until Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim arrives.

SCORE DODOTTEOD

This is the feel-good demonic-penguin-hunting-for-panties-dood game for any year. Also, it is interesting to note these penguins explode.



Prinny 2 Dawn of Operation Panties, Dood! Hellish torment handily portable



onsider Prinny 2: Dawn of Operation Panties, Dood! an interesting conversation starter. Someone on the bus or train leans over and says, "Hey, so what's that game about?" "Well, there's this bunch of exploding demon penguins, and they're on a quest to steal back a pair of stolen panties...

Maybe not something one would want to discuss in public? Regardless, it makes for good laughs, and that's the reason to play this game. It may not be a top-notch example of sidescroller design, but it sure has personality-and personality goes a long way.

Those who didn't like the way

the first Prinny controlled will likely find similar complaints with the sequel. The jump mechanics still don't give enough of a handle on the character when he's in the air, and that's a mean wrinkle to throw in a game where the stages range in difficulty from "moderate" to "murderous." True, in the context of the Disgaea universe, Prinnies are supposed to have short and painful lives, Inflicting their punishment on the player, though, is a bit much.

On the other hand, there's plenty of snarky dialogue and sight gags to kill the pain after the horrible, flaming deaths, and Dood! gives the Prinnies more cool offensive moves to delay their near-inevitable doom. It's tough

to stay angry at this game, even when it kicked us good and hard in the teeth. That might just be the neatest trick this Prinny squad's got. DAVID F. SMITH





Lord of Arcana

Moogles or no moogles, Final Fantasy it ain't

o call Lord of Arcana a barefaced imitation could be unfair. Monster Hunter fans, though, may find it hauntingly familiar. Team up with four heroes, venture into the wide world, slaughter fantasy bad guys, use their bits to make new monster-killing gear... Ring a bell, anybody?

Originality, though, isn't Arcana's problem. That basic (albeit borrowed) concept is the best thing going for it, and it's occasionally addictive in spite of itself. The rest of the time, though,

it's not all that much to look at and not much to play with.

Pacing is the key: how long it takes to do stuff and how hard it is to do it. Arcana tilts toward fairly drawn-out combat, especially during solo games. That'd be fine if players had more tactics at their disposal, but instead. battles boil down to repeating the same attacks for far too long. and boss fights go on for what feels like forever. The way the game handles experience and



skill gains is pretty unforgiving, too-bow out of a quest partway, even without dying, and that trip to the dungeon didn't happen. All the effort was for nothing.

Some dungeon-hack games smartly disguise their monotony with unexpected art direction. Monster Hunter has its detailed primeval world. Phantasy Star its colorful sci-fi future.

Arcana, save for a few inventive designs, looks like every other fantasy adventure that didn't go to the trouble, which is the root of its problems, DAVID F SMITH











Tactics Ogre Let Us Cling Together A new look for a forgotten classic

his is, more or less, the father of the contemporary strategy-role-playing game. There were similar games before it—games such as Langrisser, Shining Force, or its own predecessor Ogre Battle—but Tactics Ogre set down a style that proved to be definitive. Take a look at it and déjà vu strikes, because nearly every other turn-based battle game around looks

a heck of a lot like this one.

Keep in mind that most of them aren't quite so good. *Ogre* was a fine piece of work when it hit the states in 1998, even if it was overshadowed by a bigger name in *Final Fantasy Tactics*. This PSP remake, though, does just about everything better.

It helps to think of the common ways a game like this goes wrong. Some are

too tedious, too slow, and too hard, grinding gameplay down into a repetitive slog. The battles in *Together* are neatly balanced to be just long and challenging enough. It isn't an easy struggle by any means, but beginners can survive long enough to learn the ropes and experts will remain engaged and have to stay on their toes.

Battle Hardened

Other SRPGs are too simple—there's not enough to do, not enough options to explore, not enough different ways to win a battle. That's absolutely not a problem here. Together does two things right where depth is concerned. For one, it has a vast array of items to craft, spells to learn, and unit classes to develop and train. For another, it



Matsuno's Masterpieces 16 Years and the Quest Goes On



OGRE BATTLE SNES, 1995 Quest's first big splash in America, a dense and complex 16-bit fantasy

battle game.



PSone, 1998 Americans didn't play the Super Nintendo sequel until it was remade for the PlayStation.



TACTICS
PSone, 1998 Created strategyhacking maniacs all over the



VAGRANT STORY
PSone, 2000 Perhaps Yasumi
Matsuno's finest work,
renowned for its cerebral
combat and gripping story.



FINAL FANTASY XII PS2, 2005 Matsuno hit the big time here, but a rocky development process led to long delays.





☐ It might look complex—and to be fair, it is—but Tactics Ogre manages its difficulty curve with grace and charm. Let us cling together, indeed.





doesn't dump all those pieces on the table at once. Slowly but surely, the game system evolves as it goes, and there's plenty of time for players to learn exactly how to fight with the many different weapons.

Wisely, though, nothing ever gets too complicated. One of the kinder new features for the PSP is a revamped experience system: instead of each unit gaining experience individually, character classes advance as a group If one knight or archer was part of a battle, every knight or archer in the party gains a level. The old Final Fantasy Tactics system might still have

The goofy subtitle Let Us Cling Together is a running joke in action: every Tactics Ogre game contains a nod to a Queen song. This one is a cut from A Night at the Opera, featuring Freddy Mercury's mangled attempt to sing in Japanese. its fans, people who enjoy having to micromanage their character development down to the tiniest detail Most of us, though, will appreciate the way *Together* lets us spend more time on the fun stuff.

Nearly every other part of the game has received some kind of tweak to keep up with the times. The battlefields are three dimensional now, so there's no more trouble with units getting lost behind the terrain. A system called the Chariot Tarot lets players go back through earlier turns of a battle to try a different strategy, instead of just starting all over from scratch. And some battles have special extra victory conditions, with powerful new characters or hidden story elements as a reward.

War Stories

The revised script has many new scenes and plot threads, but it still retains the same essential character of the original game and, like most of Yasumi Matsuno's creations, it's a bitter and cynical fable; a story about trying to do the right thing while the entire surrounding world is going wrong. It isn't going to warm any hearts on cold nights, but then good

war stories rarely do.

A few bits and pieces could have stood some more work in the process of building the remake. Crafting new items takes longer than it should, thanks to some too-simple interface menus. Even if it made the system a bit more complicated, there needed to be options for crafting multiple items at once. As it is, building complex new weapons and armor involves a lot of doing the same thing over and over. A dozen different ingredients still have to be bought and crafted separately, one at a time.

When we're reduced to complaining about minor details of the menu system, though, that probably counts as a backhanded compliment. Beyond the odd minor frustration, Together reveals why the people who made the game put their permanent stamp on the genre. It's a complex, challenging

game with a powerful story
that pulls us through it,
and the portable version
adds more than enough
new elements to make it
worth playing through again
and again, DAVIDE SMITH

What we did in... Tactics Oare

20% Tried to clear just one more battle...one more battle...just one more...

20%Screemed and awore when bad guys dodged a killing blow 18% Swore more when undead enemies wouldn't die



15% Silently wished a unit could walk just one more grid square
17% Made a little chart of who backstabbed who exactly
10 Crafted the same Item components for the bundredth time

Venetica

Death becomes her



ollowing the age-old RPG formula, in Venetica, boy meets tragedy, boy gets powers, boy saves world. The only difference in this story is that boy is substituted for girl. We play as Scarlett, the daughter of Death, as she discovers she has magical abilities and is hurled into a mission to stop an evit necromancer from gaining universal power. Along the way she learns more about her mysterious gifts and is sent on innumerable "gather these items" and "kill this monster" side-ouests.





Apparently Death's daughter is not above running errands.

Venetica is an openworld action-RPG that plays like most other games of the genre. There's some leeway to customize weapons and armor and level up skills according to personal preference, but we're mostly forced to make selections on game-based necessities and requirements. There is little unique about the game—we've

Venetica would be quite the looker... on PS2...'round closing time...after major alcohol consumption.

seen this equation time and time again. The only distinguishing factor is the five-year-old graphics that seem more suited to PS2 than PS3. Factor in frequent freezing issues and dialogue-tree selections that don't seem to

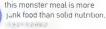
actions and Venetica doesn't stand up to current-day RPG standards.



Eat Them!

Format PSN Pub SCEA Dev FluffyLogic Price \$9.99 ESRB Teen

Borrowing a page from Godzilla flicks and the arcade classic Rampage, Eat Them! puts us in the skins of town-ter-rorizing monsters. Behind the behemoths' whipping tails, mechanical arms, and crushing tentacles, we're required to complete tasks that usually involve tearing the city a new one. Turning multilevel structures into pavement pancakes, tossing buses like beer cans, and popping people into our maw is a blast Unfortunately, repetitive objectives and frustrating difficulty spikes mean

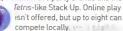




Top Darts

Format PSN Pub SCEA Dev Devil's Details Price \$9.99 ESR8 Everyone

While awaiting a lightsaber-wielding title to justify our Move purchase, *Top Darts* recreates the favorite pub pastime with an authenticity that had us craving pints of Guinness. Mimic the dart-tossing motions and the game does a surprisingly accurate job of accounting for speed and angles. Satisfying audio "thunks" and cool visual cues, like darts ricocheting off each other, up the immersion. The polished presentation compliments classic games such as 501, Around the Clock, and inventive party entries like the





Tetris

Format PSN Pub Electronic Arts Dev EA Mobile Price \$9.99 FSRB Everyone

It took a few years, but *Tetris* is finally available for PS3—reminding us why this puzzler remains an all-time classic. Frantically arranging blocks to clear lines in the Marathon mode is a tense, challenging experience, but *Tetris* offers a dozen other play variations on spinning the blocks. The six-player online modes are also an excellent addition, but we would've liked some pop in presentation beyond the 1080p visuals. Many features are carried over from the PSP Mini version, but this robust and affordable

iteration is still an essential for puzzle lovers everywhere.





Stacking

Nesting made fun

It's a brilliant idea that, on its own, is more than enough to grab our attention: a puzzler starring babushka dolls as the characters and the gameplay mechanic. Not only do we get a charming world full of diminutive details—a twee landscape furnished with pushpins, popsicle sticks, and playing cards—but an equally endearing game with puzzles as intricately layered as the matryoshka dolls themselves.

It starts simply enough: Young Charlie Blackmore is the runt of his brood, a family that's fallen on tough times. His father, who left to earn a living to support his impoverished family, has gone missing, his siblings have been shanghaied, and Charlie—like any good hero—is determined to find and rescue them all

Being a runt, Charlie can stack into the smallest of dolls, making his way up into larger and larger dolls. But it's not just about becoming the biggest on the block. With 100 different doll types-some unique, others part of the general populace—the real fun is in finding creative solutions using different combinations of nested dolls and their respective actions. Early puzzles are as straightforward as nesting into a big, blustery chap who can scatter others on command. But very soon, some of these puzzles involve a series of steps that'd make Rube Goldberg proud. One early example: Convincing some workers to move a piece



Unleashing this doll's intestinal distress results in a noxious, crowd-clearing cloud.



of a stage set, then nesting into a series of cyclists to forcibly pedal into the set piece, creating an accident that flummoxes a nearby safety engineer, who will then shut down the show he's overseeing, freeing up a key character who will then join three others (once we solve their puzzles) in an attempt to convince the captain of a cruise ship to turn the boat around. Phew!

Adding to the addictive quality of the game: every puzzle has multiple solutions (with rewards for uncovering them all); each area has numerous hidden Hi-Jinks that involve all kinds of delightful acts like flatulating on fellow dolls or seducing several men at once; and the world is full of unique dolls to find and collect (accomplished by nesting into them, after which they're added to a trophy room). It's surprisingly addictive for a game that's as much an adventure as a puzzler. The only stumble is in the cutscenes—

too frequent, too pokey, and too in love with its own kitschiness. Other than that, *Stacking* is a doll of a game. BARY STEXMAN

DLC Roundup



Costume Quest Grubbins On Ice

Venturing deep into Repugia, this new trick-or-treating adventure has our

costumed heroes aiding monsters in a revolt against the dark and powerful Araxia. New costumes grant the awesome power of pirates, yetis, and floating eyeballs, with stamps and treats galore to gather.



ModNation Racers
Far East track pack

This high-speed expansion offers an extended race series and lots of

new ways to customize cars and racers. Seven new tracks and additional objectives boost the career offerings, while unique unlockable items and props ramp-up the dame's massive customization options.

Download of the Month



Price \$14.99 ESRB Mature

If COD: Black Ops' multiplayer is starting to feel a bit too familiar by this point, Battlefield offers an alternative theater of multiplayer operation. Five new beautifully designed stages provide a great backdrop for frenetic firefights with tons of new weapons (including an awesome face-melting flamethrower).





Resident Evil Afterlife

After a painful life comes a painful afterlife.

Info

Price \$34.95, \$39.95 (30 version) Oirector Paul W.S. Anderson Starring Milla Jovovich, Ali Lerter, Boris Kodjoe Rated R Extras Deleted scenes, making-of shorts, picturein-picture mode, They keep making these movies and trankly, we have only ourselves to blame. After all, if people didn't go in droves to see the seemingly endless line of ever-worsening Resident Evit movies, Paul W.S. Anderson—whom we can only assume is Uwe Bolt's secret apprentice or evit—wouldn't be working as the next on already.

In Resident Evit. Afteritie. Andersor has outdone himself. It's even worse than the last-one, and that's actually an impressive, if dubious, feat. With a plot that seems outright allergic to logic, the latest adventures of supergirt Milla Jovovich takes enough from the games to make the trailer look positively hopeful. After all, there's a huge cloaked guy with a big honking ax, right? And the body count soff the chapts, thanks to encless hordes of both zombies and bad guys.

Also, it's in 3D, which means it

Taken as an intentionally bad Syfy Channel feature, Afterlife might be just the thing. The acting is amazingly awful—especially the guy playing Wesker, who easily pulls out the worst performance of 2010. While the action scenes have plenty of violence, most of the movie looks like as if it was directed by a rank amateur trying to copy The Matrix. That said, for those sporting new 3D-capable HDTVs,

Afterilie might seem tempting.
Indeed, the movie is exactly what's expected from 3D—a lot of stuff (lying to the TV's foreground. It's a quick ech demote show off to friends, and the superb picture and sound quality

extract an impressive visual display from cinematic garbage. Beyond that there's picture-in-picture support for the behind-the-scenes material, deleted scenes, various featurettes, and more. So fans—a depressing notion—have a fair amount to peruse

Resident Evil: Afterlife isn't a good movie in any sense of the word, but it is one of the first widely available land not store- or brand-exclusive) 3D releases. As a brief way to show off the potential of the new tech, it's technically decent, though certainly

recommendation to buy th movie, but we'll understand if early adopters can't help Themselves

ASON S'APRILE





Legend of the Guardians The Owls of Ga'Hoole

Giving a hoot to a hoot

it's almost embarrassing to try to even describe Legend of the Guardians: The Dwis of 6a Hoole. A computer animated movie about young owts that must become warriors of legend? Yet, this ikiddle low tate is easily one the best janiasies from the past year. Part of its success comes from its director—Lach Snyder. Yes, the guy who did 300 Watchmen, Sucker Punch, and soon, the new Superman, has done a kid movie and the results are specially and

As with all great kid movies (Sa Hoole works on a number of levels although it's not for the very young wewer thanks to battle sequences involving armored owls with nastytooking bladed gauntlets mercitessly shredding each other. There's no storelement adults haven't seen before either, yet the familiar themes of betrayal, friendship, and family are presented in a nature manner. That so much violence and drama is portrayed through the use of trequently adorable fluffy owls doesn't take much of the edge off either.

Snyder started off with solid source material, but went out of



his way to make sure that it was worth translating the book series to film. Ga Hoole was created in 3D, and for those searching for something worth donning the glasses for, this is it. In both 3D and 2D, this is a stunningly beautiful bit of cinema. The movie also uses the same animation techniques as Happy Feet, which make the owle look remarkably lifetike.

The extras are aimed toward young sters with a series of shorts young into the whole theme of owls, conservation, and the legends in the movie, along with a couple of minigarnes. There's also a new Looney funes short to help type the new series, which should be a boon for

> It would be easy to pass over Ga'Hoole, yet it's a striking fantasy adventure for viewers both young and old. 16

Blu-ray Roundup



Merantau

Frice \$29.98 Rated R

The Indonesian Merantau is part Ong Bok and part getting into violent trouble in the big city is hardly a new concept. Yet, the boy Yuda is a surprisingly likeable hero and the script has a nice mix of depth and pure action, even if the overly dramatic ending comes out of left field.



Catfish

Cattish is a documentary bizarrely bitled as thrilter. It's not. The movie is merely a

questionable look at two people who fall deeply into the trap of Internet socializing. Mostly, Catlish proves that merely possessing a camera and a guilble friend don't make for a movie worth watching.



Buried

Price \$29.95 Reted R Ryan Reynolds

one-man show is a hell of a thriller. The actor manages to

charm work here white conveying the sheer horrors his burial. It's definitely not a feel-good movie, but Buried starts off intense and remains painfully effective right to the bitter end.



Top Gear Series 14 and 1

Part comedy, part car pr0n, *Top Gear*

magic in the United Kingdom for more than 15 year Series 14 and 15 hit Blu-ray with great results and this is easily the best way to watch the show.



TDK 3 Speaker Boombox

TDK's reinvention of the boombox runs off either AC power or 12(!) D batteries. The center speaker is a dedicated sub and it will slurp tunes directly from an iDevice, guitar, and more.

\$499 tdk.com

Casio TRYX



Sony XBR-HX929

Sony's 30-capable LOD TV uses individually controlled LEDs to give scenes both brightness and inky blacks. It's Skype compatible, has internet connectivity, and can identify music using Gracenote.

Price TDB sonystyle.com



Want that

Lust-have stuff for PlayStation people

Sennheiser **CXC 700**

Price: \$320





Nike+ SportWatch GPS

Price TBD



The iPhone becomes the stereo with the O'Car deck, controlling Internet radio, GPS navigation, hands-free calling, videos, and apps. The deck includes an FM/RDS radio and a built-in 4x55 watt amp.

6349

oxygenaudio.com





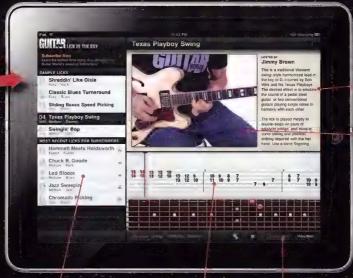
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Bothered by Brotherhood

The review for Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood (Issue #41) should have been better. You gave Assassin's Creed Il a 10, but gave Brotherhood a 7. Brotherhood improved the gameplay of Assassin's Creed II, while adding more story and missions. Also, don't forget Brotherhood gave us online. It is one of

From plus-size princesses to tiny dogs and everything in between, PTOM has got it covered

Email us at **PTOM_latters@futureus.com** or write to PTOM, c/o Future US Inc., 4000 Shoreline Ct. Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

the finest online multiplayer experiences out there. The online multiplayer is different than other online multiplayer experiences in one important way: Games like Call of Duty and Medal of Honor just have you running around shooting people, and involves a lot on luck, while Brotherhood relies solely on skill.

AUSTIN NOWACK NASHVILLE, TN

So let's get something straight: a 7 is a good score. Sure, it's no 10. But it's still a hearty recommendation to someone who's a fan of the franchise or genre. That said, Brotherhood's solo campaing just didn't charm us as much as AC2's—it felt rushed and unrefined—and the multiplayer, though innovative, isn't enough to elevate the experience to the lofty bell towers of its predecessors. Also, not sure what you mean when you say Call of Duty doesn't involve skill. That bullet we carefully

skiil. That bullet we carefully lodged into your brainpan says otherwise.

says otherwise.

sanguing sanctimomaus sanctimomaus intongruous intongruous insinuale sanguing supradnious eponymous exceptions.

Heavy Questions

On page 94 of December's issue, in the best full games for the PlayStation Network, Fat Princess was rated third best but scored an 8, while Flower was fourth best and had a 9. I was just wondering, after you play a game and review it, do you ever come back and replay a game afterward and think it was better then the rating you gave it? JAKE CURPLE SARNIA, ON, CANADA

Score alone does not dictate where a game might fall on a short list of essentials. Sometimes the sheer weight of a game, its corpulence, its flabulous magnitude, its...fatness, is enough to push it ahead of such pastoral pursuits as those found in ever-so-lovely Flower.

Lucky Son of a B-tch

I just want to share a picture of Lucky, my six-month-old Shih Tzu, holding the latest issue of PTOM. I enjoyed the entire magazine and was happy to find

Me Read Big Wurdz

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We verticeme reader photos, letters, and stories? "Submissions."), however, we cannot promise to publish any Submission and none will be returned. Naither PlayStation: The Official Magazine ("PTOM") nor Foture US, Inc. shall be the sold of dramage is any Submission. By anothing in your Submission to FTOM you are present and warrant that you own or either shew all incessary replasts to the Submissions to allows the optional to publish them in PTOM and as a follows. You grant PTOM a worldwide, reyalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive right and fully sub-Licensable License to use, copy, distribute, publish, modify, adapt, translate, and atore, your Submissions, in any form, format, or medium, of any kind now known or later developed and to use your anne, likeness, and any other information in connections the use of the Submission you provide.





As much as we'd love to blame the Empire, Greg's dismemberment is Roger's doing. When Roger says deadline, he means deadline!



out that many of my favorite games made the list, such as Resistance 3, Crysis 2, Killzone 3, and Rage. However, there was one important omission that I think should have been

covered in this issue: Duke Nukem Forever. Just the fact that this game is actually going to be released in 2011 deserves the cover itself IMHO, but it wasn't even mentioned at all!

ALFREDO FERNANDEZ NEW JERSEY

We'll skip the easy joke about Duke not coming for another decade and get to the heart of the matter: We simply haven't seen enough of the game to make a call on it. But with Gearbox's recent track record (Borderlands), we're cautiously optimistic.

Daddy Issues

My response to Roger's suggestion that supporting the government regulation of videogames would be "championing—gasp—responsibility (Issue #41): That is incorrect. Championing responsibility would be to challenge parents to take responsibility for what their children are exposed to. Our society needs to focus on rebuilding the role of the parent, not taking away obvious parental duties and asking the government to handle them instead.

RON SPRAGUE CHATTANOOGA TN



How do you guys decide what game PTOM will put on its cover for each issue? Do you guys decide on a couple of games and do eeny, meeny, miny, moe?

OXNARD, CA

Actually, it's significantly more complex than that. The process, which is a closely held secret, involves a never-ending game of Chutes and Ladders played by workers who are forced to subsist solely on spicy Slim Jims and brackish pond water. Beyond that, I cannot share any more, lest our competition get the jump on us.



Artistic I

I'm 20 years old and I've been a gamer since the original NES. I've seen a lot of conceptual art and graphics through the gaming timelines, but one thing I'd love to see is an artwork drawn by Ken displaying Gary riding a unicorn made of guns and DualShock 3 controllers, wielding Lightning's Gunblade while fighting the huge beast from The Force Unleashed II. But you've got to have Greg dismembered on the ground at some point, which brought Gary into his rage initially. Yeah, that sounds right

Go Team!

I was pleased that you guys included folding/dhome in your New Year's resolution feature (Issue #41) but you forgot to put the PTOM team number in for people to join us (57353). We are currently ranked 132 in the world With a little help, we can get back into the top 100.

Listen Up

In your resolutions feature (Issue #41) one tip was to put CDs in your PS3. I was blown away by the sound quality of the TV and especially the "visual player." Maybe reading your magazine isn't such a bad move.

ALEX HEALY PARTS LINKNOWN

Blu Blues

In some ways the PS3 is getting passed by some of the other Blu-ray players on the market. For example, I bought my parents a Blu-ray player for Christmas and it has very nice YouTube and Pandora apps built into it. On the PS3 we are forced to use the somewhat clunky browser. I would LOVE to see apps appear in the store for download that will do things like stream Pandora or make YouTube even easier to use through the PS3. Do you know if anything like that is coming?

It's true. When the PS3 launched, it wasn't just one of the best Blu-ray players available but also one of the most affordable. Other players have come down in price, though, and include a range of cool extras. We'd love to see something like Last fin lalready on Xbox Livel or Pandora, as well as other applications. On the other hand, there are a tough-to-beat range of streaming and on-demand video options on PS3.

Et Cetera

All the other stuff that distracts PTOM



Crimina

"Midway through the graphic novel collections of Ed Bruhaker's Criminal

series, and I'm loving it more than I expected. No capes, no superpowers, just raw drama and intense action. Who needs mutants and magic when the story is this good?"

GARY STEIMMAN



Trece Manor

"Just because I personally know these guys doesn't mean their album's

not good, right? With 10 short bursts of gritty pop music, their self-titled full length's a crowd pleaser. Take a listen on punknews.org and pick up the album if you like it!"



Perky Jerky "Since my blood

"Since my blood is already infused with excessive levels of caffeine. I

can't confirm whether guarana flavoring imparts Perky Jerky with energy-enhancing attributes. But it's tender, moist, and most importantly, tasty. Nomomomom."

ROGER BURCHILL



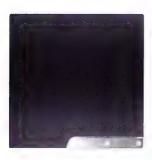
The League

low-brow humor that I'd expect from an R-rated Saturday Night

Live sketch, this raunchy FX show about fantasy football has me hooked. And I don't even play football-fantasy or real-life."

KEN BOUSQUET

directory



PS3 **Essential collection**

Build the ultimate PS3 library with our no-filler guide to the best next-gen games



Action Adventure Uncharted 2 Among Thieves

There's no way around it Nathan Drake is the PS3's biggest star and Uncharted 2 is his most impressive adventure yet, with breathtaking action and an incredible story. No excuses: Get it and play it!



Pub SCEA Dev Naughty Dog



Action Adventure God of War III

Huge beaut.ful battlegrounds and brutally gory fights with magnificent climaxes. We expected the world from the finale of Kratos' trilogy and we got it. A must-have for anyone with even the slightest amount of hinnduist



Pub SCEA Dev Santa Monica Studio



Black Ops

Black Ops improves on Modern Warfare's already awesome FPS formula. The franchise is in top form with a brand new single-player story, the be oved zombie mode, and its topnotch online multiplayer



Pub Activision Dev Treyarch



Adventure **Heavy Rain**

Innovative, intriguing, and mmersive, Heavy Rain is one of the most original titles in years The mystery of the Origami Killer will keep everyone guessing until it's solved or the heroes d e in the process



Pub SCEA Dev Quantic Dream





Openworld Shooter

Redemption

Continuing with its record of

amazıng titles, Rockstar's

gorgeous Old West with a

Pub Rockstar Games

Dev Rockstar SD/North

latest openworld game

combines a drop-dead

mesmerizing story and

fabulous characters

Red Dead



Action Adventure Batman Arkham Asylum

Finally, the Caped Crusader gets the current-gen game he deserves. Use a plethora of bat-gadgets and bat-moves to take back the Joker-controlled Arkham Asylum and love every second of it



Pub Eidos/Warner Bros. Dev Rocksteady



Metal Gear Solid 4

Hideo Kojima's masterpiece might be criticized for its lengthy cutscenes and convoluted storyline, but that shouldn't stop anyone from experiencing one of the most important games on any platform today



Dev Kojima Productions



First-Person Shooter BioShock

One of the most beautifully designed shooters of all time with an amazing story to boot. Due to the freshness and originality of the first romp through Rapture, we recommend the original over the still magnificent seque.



Pub 2K Games
Dev Irrational Games



Super Street Fighter IV

An update to the best fighting game from the most well-respected series in gaming history makes for a can't-miss title. Kicking heads and nostalgia combine to form one perfect package



Pub Capcom Dev Capcom



Hot Pursuit

The high speed pursuits from the good old days are back and they look better than ever Race the cops or join them, but the cars are hot either way so don't let that sway which side of the law to select



Pub Electronic Arts Dev Criterion Games





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Get it now on PSN





Role-Playing Platformer **Mass Effect 2** LittleBigPlanet 2

LittleB

Mass Effect 2 features a Oh Sackboy, how we love thee The biggest little game on PS3 spectacular story wrought is rocking our worlds with its with intense action and game-changing decisions, and sequel. The standard in-game the PS3 version of BioWare's third-person shooter/RPG is fare is excellent, but it's the ingenious levels crafted by the the fan community that truly the franchise's best. Bring on amaze and delight Mass Effect 3 Pub SCEA

Pub Electronic Arts Dev BloWare





P P CB

Role-Playing **Final Fantasy XIII**

It takes a bit of a commitment, but the gorgeous visuals, crazy deep combat, and oh yes, the lovely heroine Lightning, make this lengthy role-playing game more than worth the time it takes to get through it



Pub Square Enix Dev Square Enix



Stealth Adventure Assassin's Creed II

While the first Assassin's Creed may not quite have lived up to its full potential. Ubisoft built off what they learned to create the best parkour-influenced stealth game of all time. It doesn't hurt that it's awfully pretty in action either.



Pub Ubisoft Bev Ubisoft Montreal



Music **Rock Band 3**

Didn't think we could pass up the best party game going right now, did you? With a massive songlist and the brilliant new Pro mode, Rock Band 3 easily overtakes its rival Guitar Hero for the top music game on PS3



Pub EA/MTV Games Dev Harmonix



First-Person Shooter Dead Space 2

This chilling space horror sequel leaves us jumping at every turn. New enemies, terrifying environments, and the feeling that death is around every corner make this a game worth checking out. Turn out the lights, if you dare



Pub Electronic Arts Dev Visceral Games



Killzone 2

One of the best looking PS3 exclusives with fantastic multiplayer and a beautifully polished single-player campaign. Be warned, though. The game's name isn't just cool; it's perfectly fitting. Killzone 2 can get tough



Pub SCEA Dev Guerrilla Games



Sports MLB 10 The Show

The undisputed king of the diamond keeps getting better and better. The key? It's perfect batter/pitcher interface. Deep, rewarding gameplay and a ridiculous amount of polish make it the best sports game around.



Pub SCEA Dev SCE San Diego



Openworld Action Grand Theft Auto IV

There's a reason why GTA sells like crazy. This openworld gangster game is one of the most incredible achievements that the videogame medium has to offer. Great story, great characters, great adventure. Just plain great.



Pub Rockstar Games Dev Rockstar North



Action Adventure Castlevania Lords of Shadow

It's sort of like God of War, but better, but not as good, too. This Castlevania reboot is not only the first great 3D iteration of the long-running series, but an epic adventure in its own memorable right



Pub Konami Dev MercurySteam



PSP

Essential collection

PlayStation's 10 best handheld games. Whether on the road or on the couch, just play them.



Action Adventure
God of War
Ghost of Sparta

Kratos is back with, what else, a vengeance. Ghost of Sparta is the newest addition to the franchise and, trust us, there will be blood in this poignant adventure, with one of the best endings in the entire series.



Pub SCEA Dev Ready At Dawn



Action Adventure
God of War
Chains of Olympus

We just had to put both of them on our list. The huge boss fights and memorable puzzles are not lost on the PSP in this larger-than-life series. A must-own for any God of War fan.



Dev Ready At Dawn



Platformer LittleBigPlanet

Aside from being one of the most adorable games ever, LittleBigPlanet is also a fully interactive, fully customizable, fully awesome puzzle platformer. This game deserves our full-fledged creative attention.



Pub SCEA
Dev SCE Cambridge



Openworld Action

Grand Theft Auto
Liberty City

Some of us fondly remember the first Grand Theft Auto. Well, all the sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll our parents warned us about is still alive and well and ready for consumption in this openworld PSP game.



Pub Rockstar Games Dev Rockstar North



Puzzle Action
LocoRoco 2

LocoRoco 2 is a huge improvement on its already wonderful predecessor. Solve puzzles and work around the world to save the LocoRoco. It's impossible to feel down after hearing the game's infectiously happy soundtrack.



Pub SCEA Bev Sony Japan Studio



Action RPG Crisis Core Final Fantasy VII

A Final Fantasy fan's collection isn't complete without Crisis Core. With gorgeous cutscenes, familiar faces, and action-based role-playing, Crisis Core proves epic does fit in our hands.



Pub Square Enix Dev Square Enix



Third-Person Shooter Resistance Retribution

Resistance: Retribution is a dark third-person shooter that fans of the series will love. Those worned that the series wouldn't transfer well to PSP need not fret one bit—save the fear for the Chimera.



Pub SCEA Dev Bend Studio



Openworld Action

Grand Theft Auto
Chinatown Wars

Take to the streets of Chinatown with the best story-line we've ever experienced in a 67A game. The action has a top-down view, but there's no need to look down on this crime-game masterpiece.



Pub Rockstar Games
Dev Rockstar North



Stealth Action

Metal Gear Solid

Peace Walker

Set 10 years after Snake Eater, Peace Walker is required playing for MGS fans. Offering beautiful cutscenes and a wonderful squad recruitment system, it's almost too solid to be believed.



Pub Konami Dev Konami



Role-Playing
Persona 3
Portable

Fans of Persona or other Shin Megami Tensei games will know that any of these titles are bound to be good. This rather controversial RPG translates to the PSP flawlessly.



Pub Atlus USA Dev Atlus

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PSN

Best Games

It's the best of the best! Get the lowdown on this month's PSN goodies no one should live without.

BEST FULL GAMES



Tricks and Treats
Costume Quest

Sure, it's Halloween themed, but the adventure itself is timeless. With candy and monster-smiting in equal measure, this sugary delight is a charming homage to Final Fanlasy X-2, enhanced by dev. Tim Schafer's unique humor



Pub THQ Dev Double Fine



Retro Revival
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX

There'll always be a place in our hearts for gaming's gluttonous yellow goober—but nostalgia be damned, this retro homage offers a whole new frenetic take on the classic gameplay



Pub Namco Bandai Dev Namco Bandai



Platforming Puzzle Racer Joe Danger

A mix of ExciteBike-style racing and insane stunt-driven platforming action, this vibrant indie gem shines brightly among the best PSN offerings available. Getting wild and dangerous has never been this awesone.



Pub Hello Games
Dev Hello Games



Zen Exploration Flower

This gorgeous concept game makes blowing hordes of fluttering petals around a lush natural environment into an unforgettable experience that holds up against the biggest triple-A offerings. Don't pass this one up



Pub SCEA Dev thatgamecompany



Puzzle Shooter
PixelJunk Shooter

The fourth entry in the PixelJunk series is easily the best. Saving trapped mining colonists with a versattle, environmental puzzle-solving ship is a creative and challenging affair taxing both the mind and reflexes



Pub SCEA Dev Q-Games

BEST DEMOS



Third-Person Horror Dead Space 2

Gruesome things are lurking in the darkness of space—things that require excessive exceration. Join Isaac Clarke for some serious necromorph curb-stomping action in this grizzly demo that delivers freaky chills and ample gore.

Pub Electronic Arts Dev Visceral Games



Space Shooter RPG Mass Effect 2

After being blown up and brought back to life, Commander Shepard wakes up amidst gunfire and alarms Mount an exciting escape by battling through a doomed space station swarming with killer robots

Pub Electronic Arts
Dev BioWare



World-Building Platformer LittleBigPlanet 2

Dive into some crazy new territory in this adorable romp starring everyone's favorite little Sackdude. Experience a zany taste of robotic animal riding, tower climbing grapple action, and multiplayer rocket flunging qoodness.

Pub SCEA
Dev Media Molecule



Boardgame Warfare RISK Factions

Featuring a cartoony presentation and oddball combatants, this campaign training exercise offers an introduction to the classic game RISK. See how the objective-based gameplay changes up the old formula.

Pub Electronic Arts Dev Stainless Games



Handheld RPG Hacking Lord of Arcana (PSP)

Looting caverns and nopping into real-time battless what draws us to dungeon crawlers, but carving up evil denizens in sprays of blood is the most brutally satisfying part of this portable demo.

Pub Square Enix Dev Square Enix

PSN Video Delivery Service Spotlight

What we're watching on our PS3 this month





Unstoppable

ETA February 15 Rated PG-13 Genre Drama / Thriller Studio 20th Century Fox

Even in an era where interstellar combat is so last year, there is something compelling about a runaway train movie. Load up the unanned behemoth with a toxic cargo and the unstoppable locomotive is transformed into the little engine that could kill us all. Since

FEMA can't be troubled to respond to a crisis within, say, six months, our fave man on fire Denzel Washington and Capt. James Tiberius Kirk v2.0 Chris Pine take up the hot pursuit—which makes it easy to understand why we're hopping aboard for this ride.



BEST FREE STUFF



Real-Time Strategy R.U.S.E. Manhattan Project pack

This free expansion add-on brings the power of nukes to the table and encourages players to fire it all up with two awesome new multiplayer modes and three new maps to battle across

Pub **Ubisoft** Dev **Eugen Systems**



Third-Person Assassination AC Brotherhood Animus Project 1.0

A new Assassin's Creed map loaded with high perches, and mutillevel structures to slay through is only half of the funhere. The other treat is a tougher Advanced Adiance multiplayer mode.

Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft Montreal



Third-Person Adventure Uncharted 3 BTS #1: The Reveal

Go behind-the-scenes for an up-close and-personal look at the making of *Uncharted 3*—the first part of a documentary chronicling the Naughty Dog dev team's creative approach and process.

Pub SCEA Dev Naughty Dog



Open-World Investigation L.A. Noire trailer

Ozing grit and personality from its every pore, this teaser trailer sets the new Rockstar game's tone perfectly with a foot chase through dark city streets. This classic detective tale appears packed with murder and wailing jazz.

Pub Rockstar Games Dev Team Bondi



First-Person Flashback Battlefield BC2 Vietnam trailer

Torrents of bullets and geysers of deadly flame make this explosive teaser for Battlefield: Bad Company 2's Vietnam-era expansion an unforgettable time trip to a distant war zone.

Pub Electronic Arts Dev DICE

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